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A-League Round 12 Friday 21st Dec - Sunday 23rd Dec 2012



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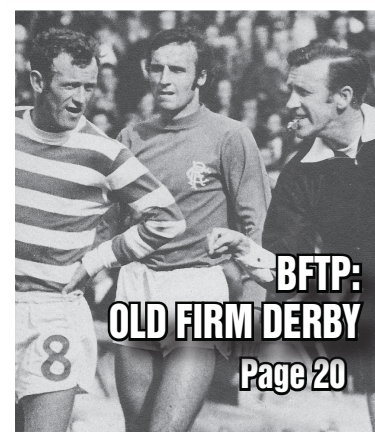
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Roar Announces Major Football Department Restructure

Brisbane Roar today has restructured its Football Department with Head Coach Rado Vidosic elevated to the role of Technical Director and Mike Mulvey appointed as Head Coach.

Following a regularly scheduled review of operations, the decision was made to put Vidosic into a broader technical role that incorporates Bakrie Group football interests in Europe, South America, Asia and Australia.

As a consequence of the restructure it was necessary to appoint a new Head Coach, with Mulvey successfully securing the position from a select group of potential options available to the club.

Brisbane Roar General Manager Sean Dobson said the club was keen to make even better use of Vidosic's vast technical knowledge of the game through his new position.

"Rado's contribution to the success of Brisbane Roar has been immeasurable," Dobson said.

"His technical analysis and knowledge is second-to-none and we believe with his new role he can be even more effective.

"Rado is a champion of the club and typifies the commitment and dedication we look for in all our staff.

"We are excited about the new role which will coordinate our global interests in football while at the same time bringing an exciting challenge to Rado that is more suitable to his expertise and expectations."

In his new position Vidosic will be engaged as an analyst for the



Rado Vidosic



Mike Mulvey

Hyundai A-League squad while also working on developing Brisbane Roar's youth program.

Brisbane Roar has already launched its expanded youth development program and with Vidosic's input, the club is building towards growing the program statewide to assist in the development of young footballers from all regions of Queensland.

Vidosic said he was excited by the opportunities which would present themselves as part of his new position.

"It is with great excitement that I have accepted this new position with Brisbane Roar and the wider Pelita Jaya Cronus football group," he said.

"The role of Technical Director is one which, I believe, will have long term benefits not only for the club but football in Queensland.

"The development of an

academy providing a pathway for talented young footballers is something I have advocated for, for some time and to be a part of the process to establish the groundwork for a youth development program is something I am very excited about.

"I would like to thank the club's owners for their belief in me and for giving me the opportunity to be involved at the highest level."

Mulvey will join Brisbane Roar in an interim position following Vidosic's decision to step immediately into the Technical Director position with the club. The former Gold Coast United coach was chosen from a shortlist of Australian coaches to fill the vacant position.

Brisbane Roar General Manager Sean Dobson said the decision was made with due consideration to the core values of the club.

"After speaking to Mike it was clear his values and expectations

met those of the club," Dobson said.

"We are very proud of the philosophy, culture and style of play which has been fostered over the past few seasons and any coach who took on the Head Coach responsibility would need to embrace those key elements. "While they would always be given scope to implement their own ideas, the core values of the club must always be maintained and in Mike we believe we have found the happy medium."

Mulvey has a fine record working with talented young players having developed a crop of youngsters who starred for his former club Gold Coast United and have subsequently been signed by other Hyundai A-League clubs, including Brisbane's Ben Halloran.

During his time at Gold Coast United the former Queensland Academy of Sport Head Coach

successfully guided the National Youth League squad to consecutive titles.

He also has four national women's football titles to his credit as the former head of the QAS women's football program, as well as holding a position as assistant coach with the Australian U20s side between 2007 and 2009.

While Mulvey's position is initially on an interim basis, there is scope for the position to become permanent following a review at the end of the season. Dobson said the move was critical in helping to establish a long-term and stable environment within the club.

"While we're confident in Mike's ability to make a positive impact on the Football Department, and club as a whole, the appointment needs to be the right fit for both parties," he said.

"In this instance, Mike and the club will have the ability to sit down at the end of the season, assess the situation and make a rational decision whether the relationship meets everybody's expectations.

"Football is a results business, but this will not be the only category the club uses to measure success.

"Mike is completely aware of our expectations and what we want to achieve, both he and the club are very happy with the arrangement."

Mulvey started immediately, with his first session with the playing squad on Thursday morning at Suncorp Stadium.

Richmond Eagles

Appoint Micky P

Victorian Premier League club, Richmond Soccer Club, is delighted to announce that former Socceroo Micky Petersen will join the club in 2013 as Coaching Development Advisor.

Mick represented Australia over 54 times and won the NSL (the forerunner of the A-League) as both a player with Brunswick Juventus and South Melbourne, and as a coach with South.

Micky is universally acknowledged as one of the finest midfielders to have been produced by Australia and was recruited at age 21 by Ajax of Amsterdam where he played with former Melbourne Heart Coach, John Van't Schip.

Having been coached by such notable identities as Johann Cruyff, Ferenc Puskas and Ange Postecoglou, Micky's coaching philosophy is one that concentrates on technique, touch, tempo and teamwork.

His role with Richmond will concentrate on establishing a coaching philosophy and importantly providing input and mentorship to all coaches from Under 6 to the First Team.

Newly appointed First Team Coach Jean Marc Imbert is delighted with the appointment with both of them recently exchanging views over their coaching philosophies and planning for season 2013.

Commenting on his new role Micky said "I was not actively looking to get actively involved in a club again, but I found the passion of the Richmond Board infectious.

They have ambitious plans for the club based on both player and coach development and a complete commitment to ensuring the administration and off field activities are best practice"

Richmond SC President Wolfgang Smoger said of Petersen's appointment "Micky will undoubtedly add value to the club across all age groups.

Having met with him a number of times I was struck by the number of times he mentioned that coaches occupy a crucial role as football educators.

The research and due diligence we have undertaken leave us in no doubt that Micky is a crucial part of the future plans and direction of the club.

The acquisition of Micky and recent appointment of Jean-Marc Imbert and his assistant Tony Merakis are important steps in the long term strategy of the club.

We are delighted that Micky shares the Board's vision and enthusiasm as we position Richmond Soccer Club for more success.

SYDNEY FC STATEMENT REGARDING DEL PIERO

Below is a statement from Sydney FC Chairman Scott Barlow regarding Alessandro Del Piero.

"We have always viewed Alessandro Del Piero's time here at Sydney FC as a long term project and this was reaffirmed at our monthly board meeting early this week.

"We would like for Alessandro to remain at Sydney FC next season and we will also begin talking to him about opportunities beyond 2014.

"There are a number of details yet to be worked through with Alessandro's management regarding next season and these discussions will take place over the coming weeks".

IFILL OUT FOR FOUR TO SIX WEEKS

The Wellington Phoenix will be without star striker Paul Ifill for at least the next month.

Ifill entered hospital on Friday for an operation to clean out his right ankle and physiotherapist Wayne Roberts said it would be four to six weeks before he is back in action.

Head coach Ricki Herbert said it was disappointing to lose such an influential player over what is a busy period, but it was in the best interest of the striker to have the operation immediately.

"The injury has obviously been affecting Paul's form and rather than wait till the end of the season



I felt it best to get it done now," Herbert said.

"It is in his best interest, and ours, to have him back to his best for the rest of the season."

PHOENIX TAKING ALLEGED ABUSE OF PLAYER SERIOUSLY

Wellington Phoenix released a statement during the week indicating that it is taking very seriously the alleged racially abusive comments made toward Paul Ifill during the Club's A-League match against Adelaide United last Sunday.

The Phoenix has formally approached the FFA to ask for their assistance in ensuring that the incident is fully investigated. The New Zealand club has also been in communication with Adelaide United regarding the incident and have accepted Adelaide United's unequivocal apology for the incident. The statement read that it is satisfied that Adelaide United, the FFA and the South Australian Police are taking all the appropriate steps necessary. The Club reiterated its committed to ensuring that its players are not subject to any form of racial abuse at any time. There will be no further comment from the Club on the issue at this time.

Djite signs new Reds deal

Adelaide United FC has landed another significant coup as it continues to shape its squad for next season with striker Bruce Djite the latest to agree to terms on a new two year contract.

The 25 year old with 75 games of Hyundai A-League experience and 22 goals to his name can see exciting times ahead at the Reds and is more than happy to remain an Adelaide United player until at least the end of the 2014/15 season.

Djite's new deal comes after he spent two years at the Reds between 2006 and 2008 before he left to ply his trade in Turkey, which was followed by a stint in China and then with the now defunct Gold Coast United.

In his first spell at the Reds, Djite quickly became somewhat of a cult figure among the United faithful. Fast forward to today and Djite says that continued support of the fans, together with the squad that the club is assembling, made the decision easy about where he wanted to continue his football.

"I look at the squad now and I remember welcoming guys like Eugene (Galekovic) and Cassio with open arms when they first came



to the club, so obviously I love the place, the fans have been fantastic, the team is superb and I think that's a big thing, when you've got so many good players you want to be part of that," Djite said. "Having good players attracts good players as well. I think we can achieve some special things in the next few years and I think we're definitely on the right track." "If I'm going to stay in the A-League I think this the club to be at."

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VICTORIA'S LEADER IN TEAM WEAR

SCOREBOARD

TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Central Coast Mariners	11	8	2	1	21	8	13	26
2 Adelaide United FC	11	8	1	2	20	10	10	25
3 Melbourne Victory	11	5	2	4	18	21	-3	17
4 West Sydney Wanderers	11	5	1	5	8	8	0	16
5 Perth Glory	11	4	2	5	12	10	2	14
6 Newcastle Jets	11	4	1	6	14	22	-8	13
7 Wellington Phoenix	11	3	3	5	14	15	-1	12
8 Melbourne Heart	11	3	3	5	12	14	-2	12
9 Brisbane Roar	11	3	2	6	14	14	0	11
10 Sydney FC	11	3	1	7	14	25	-11	10

THIS WEEK

ROUND 12
Fri Dec 21
Fri Dec 21
Sat Dec 22
Sat Dec 22
Sat Dec 22

FIXTURE

West Sydney Wanderers v Adelaide United
Brisbane Roar v Perth Glory
Wellington Phoenix v Central Coast Mariners
Newcastle Jets v Sydney FC
Melbourne Heart v Melbourne Victory

VENUE

Parramatta Stadium
Suncorp Stadium
Westpac Stadium
Hunter Stadium
AAMI Park

LOCAL

7:00pm
8:00pm
5:00pm
5:30pm
7:45pm

AEDT

7:00pm
9:00pm
3:00pm
5:30pm
7:45pm

NEXT WEEK

ROUND 13
Wed Dec 26
Thu Dec 27
Thu Dec 27
Thu Dec 27
Fri Dec 28

FIXTURE

Adelaide United v Brisbane Roar
Wellington Phoenix v Melbourne Heart
Sydney FC v Central Coast Mariners
Perth Glory v West Sydney Wanderers
Melbourne Victory v Newcastle Jets

VENUE

Hindmarsh Stadium
Westpac Stadium
Allianz Stadium
Patersons Stadium
AAMI Park

LOCAL

7:00pm
7:30pm
7:30pm
6:45pm
7:30pm

AEDT

7:30pm
5:30pm
7:30pm
9:45pm
7:30pm

ROUND 11 RESULTS

Central Coast Mariners 2
(Bojic 49, 69)
Melbourne Heart 0
Crowd: 6921 @ Bluetongue Stadium

Sydney FC 0
Western Sydney 2
(Hersi 24, Beauchamp 77)
Crowd: 26,176 @ Allianz Stadium

Melbourne Victory 1
(Milligan 49)
Brisbane Roar 1 (Halloran 24)
Crowd: 17,128 at AAMI Park

Adelaide United 3
(Carrusca 19, 24, Ferreira 45)
Wellington Phoenix 1
(Sanchez 80)
Crowd: 8,657 @Hindmarsh Stadium

Perth Glory 3
(Dodd 44', 48'), Smeltz (75'(pen))
Newcastle Jets 0
Venue: nib Stadium

TOP GOAL SCORERS

9 - Daniel McBREEN (Mariners)
7 - Jeremy BROCKIE (Phoenix)
6 - Marco ROJAS (Victory)
5 - Emile HESKEY (Jets)
Alessandro DEL PIERO (SFC)
Dario VIDOSIC (Adelaide U)
Besart BERISHA (Roar)
4- Jeronimo NEUMANN (AUFC)
Ryan GRIFFITHS (Jets)
Andrew NABBOUT (Victory)



No movement amongst the hot-shots this week, but a brace from Mariner Pedj Bojic (pictured), Marcelo Carrusca (Adelaide United) and Travis Dodd (Perth Glory), took all the limelight in front of goals.

A-LEAGUE TEAM OF THE WEEK ROUND 11

Compiled by Steven Talevski



GK: Michael Theo – Brisbane Roar can thank their number one between their sticks for a decisive point against the Victory as the former Melbourne goalkeeper pulled off save after save.

RB: Pedj Bojic – The fullback was the only man on the scoresheet at Bluetongue Stadium with a double from long distance against Melbourne Heart.

CB: Michael Beauchamp – The Wanderers captain scored their second goal in their two nil derby victory and was a solid rock in the centre of their defence.

CB: Michael Thwaite – Is there any other defender in as much form as Michael Thwaite. The defender continues to prove why Holger Osieck is keeping an eye on him after he had another good game in the centre of defence for the Glory.

LB: Jack Hingert – Yes, he does play at right back but the youngster deserves a spot in Goal! Weekly's team of the week after an impressive performance against a rampaging Victory attack.

RCM: Mark Milligan – Milligan scored a cracking equaliser in a solid performance after returning from international duty.

LCM: Shinji Ono – The former Japanese international had a terrific game in the Sydney derby in his best performance so far in the A-League.

RAM: Marcelo Carrusca – The Argentine had a fantastic match for the Reds as he was one of three players this weekend to score a double with his second goal being a great strike into the bottom near post.

CAM: Tom Rogic – Coming back from international duty, the youngster slotted back comfortably in the Mariners line up and was their main threat against the Heart's defence.

LAM: Travis Dodd – Dodd didn't let his chances slip against the Jets scoring a double which included a nice header.

ST: Fabio Ferreira – Formerly on the books at European Champions, Chelsea FC, Ferreira has been impressive for Adelaide since signing from the second tier in New South Wales. Ferreira was one of many standouts this weekend for Adelaide as he scored his third goal of the season.

Star Man

Michael Theo
Brisbane Roar



He may have conceded a strike to Mark Milligan but Theo was superb against his old side. Brisbane Roar has him to thank with walking away from Melbourne with a point as Theo made crucial saves denying both Marco Rojas and Guilherme Finkler.

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CC Mariners

2
Melbourne Heart

0
Match Details
Central Coast Mariners 2

(Bojic 49', 69')

Melbourne Heart 0

Bluetongue Stadium, Gosford

Attendance: 6,921

Referee: Lucien Laverdure

Central Coast Mariners: 1. Mathew Ryan (Gk), 2. Daniel McBreen, 3. Joshua Rose, 4. Pedj Bojic, 6. Patrick Zwaanswijk, 7. John Hutchinson (c), 9. Bernie Ibini (8. Adriano Pellegrino 89'), 10. Tomas Rogic (19. Mitchell Duke 81'), 14. Michael McGlinchey, 16. Trent Sainsbury, 18. Nick Montgomery

Substitutes not used: 20. Justin Pasfield (Gk), 5. Zachary Anderson

Yellow cards: Ryan 73'
Red cards: Nil

Melbourne Heart: 1. Clint Bolton (Gk), 2. Michael Marrone, 4. Simon Colosimo, 5. Fred (c), 6. Patrick Gerhardt, 8. Matthew Thompson, 9. Dylan Macallister (14. Golgol Mebrahtu 67'), 11. Richard Garcia (22. Nick Kalmar 46'), 15. David Williams, 16. Aziz Behich, 17. Jason Hoffman

Substitutes not used: 20. Andrew Redmayne (Gk), 18. David Vrankovic

Yellow cards: Marrone 19', Gerhardt 42', Behich 63', Colosimo 71'
Red cards: Nil

Mariners Set in Their Winning Ways

By Adrian Deans

A pattern is starting to form.

In the first halves of football matches the Mariners seem to be content merely to hold possession – constricting and choking the confidence out of their prey before swallowing them up in the second half.

They did it against Brisbane and Adelaide, and they did it again on Friday night – squeezing until the Heart stopped beating.

The secret behind this approach is twofold. First there is technique – the faster you control a ball the more time you have to do something with it. All of the Mariners are great on the ball.

The second part of the secret is strategy. The Mariners are so well drilled in every aspect of play that they always know automatically what they are going to do with the ball before they get it. This saves a great deal of time on unnecessary decision making and dithering and clearly sets them apart from all other teams in the A-League – with the partial exception of teams coached by Ange Postecoglou.

They don't always get on top first – they've had to come from behind a couple of times, but once the Mariners start to apply pressure and score a goal, only rarely have the opposition been able to respond. The Mariners momentum is unstoppable once it starts to hurt.

The teams went in 0 – 0 at half time but the Heart had been looking wobbly in the last ten minutes. For half an hour they'd been doing a great job closing Rogic down, but that only left more space for Rose and Bojic which meant a lot of running and readjusting for the defence. It couldn't last. Rogic started to run free towards the end of the half, but in the second half he ran riot – setting up numerous chances and sending the



Whoops No.1: Pedj Bojic's free-kick somehow eludes the outstretched hands of Clint Bolton. Photo: KAREN DOUGLAS

locals into raptures with his pace, poise and purpose.

But it was Pedj Bojic who broke the deadlock with a viciously dipping and swerving shot from 30 metres that slipped through Bolton's fingers. There was a lot on it but Bolton will be disappointed to watch the replay.

It was about to get worse. Shortly afterwards the Mariners had a free kick from about 30 metres which Bojic drove straight through the wall. It was hard on Bolton – if the wall was rock solid, then the rock was pumice – but again he'll hate to see the replay.

After that, the Mariners closed

out the match in professional fashion. They probably should have won by a couple more and Daniel McBreen, in particular, will be ruing chances to bring on the new contract talks. One more goal is all he needs and with only eleven matches played, I'm tipping him to get twenty this year.

This time last year the Mariners were similarly setting the standard, but in January they sold Matt Simon and Rostyn Griffiths. The club needed the money so it was a perfectly sane decision, but they never recovered from the loss of those players. It is to be hoped that they can hang onto

their key players this year but there will be plenty of tempting offers.

Mat Ryan is very likely to go to England but, great keeper though he is, his absence won't upset the playing style on the pitch. Offers are inevitable for Tom Rogic, but he just may wish to finish this season under Graham Arnold's tutelage. If (and when) he goes, I really hope the Mariners get what he's worth. Transfer fees under a million dollars are the norm for A-League players but this boy is something very special. The Mariners should hold out for plenty with a big on-selling share.

Michael McGlinchey (apparently) is hoping for a move back to Europe and is playing well enough to warrant it. Trent Sainsbury is the dark horse – he's been fabulous this year and can clearly go to another level. No doubt he will before too much longer. But not yet Trent. Not yet.

Adrian Deans is the author of Mr Cleansheets – published by Vulgar Press, distributed by Dennis Jones and Associates and available in all good book stores. Ebook also available.



Whoops No. 2: Clint Bolton scrambles as he might, but the Heart keeper is unable to stop Pedj Bojic's shot from trickling over the line. Photo: KAREN DOUGLAS



Two-goal hero Pedj Bojic (Mariners) and Matt Thompson (Heart) are both keen to pounce on the loose ball. Photo: KAREN DOUGLAS



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PART PAYMENTS
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Perth Glory

3

Newcastle Jets

0

Match Details

Perth Glory 3 (Dodd 44', 48'),

Smeltz (75'(pen))

Newcastle Jets 0

Venue: nib Stadium

Perth Glory: 1.Danny Vukovic, 3.Bas Van Den Brink, 7.Jacob Burns, 8.Dean Heffernan (17.Chris Harold 71'), 9.Shane Smeltz (4.Billy Mehmet 83'), 10.Liam Miller (6.Nick Ward 90'), 13.Travis Dodd, 14.Steve McGarry, 19.Joshua Risdon, 21.Scott Jamieson, 23.Michael Thwaite.

Yellow Cards: Jamieson 84'.

Red Cards: None

Newcastle Jets: 33.Matthew Nash, 2.Scott Neville, 3.Tiago Calvano, 4.Josh Mitchell, 5.Dominik Ritter, 8.Ruben Zadkovich, 9.Emile Heskey, 17.James Virgili, 22.Adam Taggart, 23.Ryan Griffiths, 24.Mitchell Oxborrow.

Yellow cards: Oxborrow 40',

Goodwin 81'.

Red cards: None

Glory Ground Jets With Winning Tonic Display

By Gareth Morgan

A brace from Travis Dodd and a Shane Smeltz penalty powered Perth Glory to a convincing 3-0 victory over Newcastle Jets at nib Stadium on Friday night, the result rocketing Ian Ferguson's side back into the top four.

But while Dodd will inevitably grab most of the headlines courtesy of his double, Glory's victory also owed much to some fine goal-keeping from Danny Vukovic, a sparkling midfield display from the returning Liam Miller and Steven McGarry's livewire performance just behind lone striker Smeltz.

Neither side were quite at their flowing best in a hard-fought arm-wrestle of a first-half, although there was nothing below par about respective goalkeepers Vukovic and Matthew Nash who produced two top-quality saves apiece.

Glory's number one did superbly to block James Virgili's shot with his legs after the young winger had been sent clear on goal by Adam Taggart and repeated the trick on 23 minutes, racing smartly off his line to foil Emile Heskey as the former England man prepared to pull the trigger from the edge of the box.

Nash, meanwhile, went full length to keep out a header from Michael Thwaite after the central defender had risen highest to meet a Scott Jamieson free-kick and shortly before the break, bravely denied Shane Smeltz who had been taken advantage of a slip from Tiago Calvano to latch onto a through ball from Josh Risdon and race in on goal.

The Kiwi striker was left with his head in his hands as he rued that uncharacteristic miss, but he was all smiles eight minutes later when Dodd put the home side in front.

Young Jets midfielder Mitchell



The Glory players mob Travis Dodd after getting on the scoresheet with a well take brace. Photo: CRAIG ECCLES

Oxborrow disastrously coughed up possession on the edge of his own box and Dodd took full advantage.

Calmly side-stepping a despairing challenge from his former Glory team-mate Josh Mitchell, the 32-year-old drew Nash off his line before calmly slipping the ball past him to claim his second goal of the season.

Having finished the first-half on the front foot, Glory started the second in a similar vein and although Nash produced a fine save on 48 minutes to keep out a fizzing

drive from Jacob Burns, the Ferguson's men doubled their advantage from the resulting corner.

Scott Jamieson took it quickly, denying the Jets defence time to set itself, Liam Miller bent in the cross and Dodd did the rest, his glancing close-range header leaving Nash helpless.

Two goals down at a ground where they have tasted victory only once in eleven visits and reeling from a week of off-field turmoil, the Jets could have been forgiven for crumbling.

But instead, Gary van Egmond's

side launched a spirited comeback, coming close to halving the deficit just short of the hour-mark when the lively Virgil teed up Ryan Griffiths only for Vukovic to block his low shot from the edge of the box.

It therefore seemed a little harsh on the men from the Hunter when it was Glory who claimed the game's next goal and the controversial circumstances in which it arrived wouldn't have helped van Egmond's mood.

Mitchell appeared to get plenty of the ball when challenging Smeltz

just inside the box, but referee Ben Williams deemed it worthy of a penalty and the league's record goalscorer crashed the spot-kick home in emphatic fashion to send the Shed into raptures.

As if to rub salt into the wound, Heskey then had a header cleared off the line by Risdon within seconds of the re-start and Vukovic kept out a late strike from Dominik Ritter to preserve the home side's clean sheet and send them into next Friday's clash with Brisbane in buoyant mood.



Shane Smeltz makes no mistake from the spot to put the icing on the cake with a comprehensive win for the Glory. Photo: CRAIG ECCLES



The race is on for Emile Heskey (Jets) and Scott Jamieson (Glory). Photo: CRAIG ECCLES

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HUNTER SPORTS SUPERSTORE



Melbourne Victory



1

Brisbane Roar



1

Match Details

Melbourne Victory 1 (Mark Milligan 49')
Brisbane Roar 1 (Ben Halloran 24')
 Venue: AAMI Park
 Saturday, 15 December 2012
 Referee: Jarred Gillett
 Attendance: 17,128

Melbourne Victory: 39. Nathan Coe, 3. Adama Traore, 5. Mark Milligan, 7. Gui Finkler, 9. Marcos Flores (26. Andrew Nabbout 70'), 10. Archie Thompson (8. Jonathan Bru 89'), 11. Marco Rojas, 13. Diogo Ferreira, 14. Billy Celeski (6. Leigh Broxham 46'), 23. Adrian Leijer, 24. Nicholas Ansell.

Unused Substitutes: 1. Tando Velaphi

Yellow Cards: Billy Celeski 222', Mark Milligan 29', Leigh Broxham 70'
 Red Cards: Nil

Brisbane Roar: 1. Michael Theo, 2. Matt Smith, 3. Shane Stefanutto, 5. Ivan Franjic, 6. Erik Paartalu, 7. Besart Berisha (10. Henrique 58'), 8. Massimo Muroccca, 11. Ben Halloran, 17. Mitch Nichols 16. Do Dong-Hyun 73'), 19. Jack Hingert (13. Yuji Takahashi 89'), 22. Thomas Broich.

Unused Substitutes: 20. Matt Acton

Yellow Cards: Besart Berisha 42'
 Red CardS: Nil

Quality Control Performance For Victory and Roar

By Roy Hay

Melbourne Victory could not erase the memory of the five-nil hammering in the second round of the A-League at AAMI Park on Saturday night as it struggled to a one-all draw with a very impressive Brisbane Roar.

The game was played at a high tempo throughout and had plenty of quality efforts by both sides. Victory started strongly, dominating the opening half-hour but could not find a way to convert pressure into goals. Victory brought in youngster Nicholas Ansell for his first A-League game with Andrew Nabbout dropping to the bench. Ansell slotted into defence alongside skipper Adrian Leijer allowing Adama Traore to exploit his pace down the left flank. Socceroos Archie Thompson, Mark Milligan and Richard Garcia returned and started.

Roar coach Rado Vidosic had skipper Matt Smith and Ivan Franjic back from their spell with the national team in Hong Kong.

A high quality first half was punctuated by a series of free kicks. Most of these were warranted and went against Victory, but the home fans were not amused.

Archie Thompson got away from the Roar defence in the 19th minute and sent a cross into the path of Marco Rojas who struck it firmly and sweetly bringing a brilliant save from Michael Theo, the former Victory keeper.

Brisbane opened the scoring following a free kick in the 24th minute. The ball was half-cleared but headed back in by Besart Berisha and Thomas Broich across the Victory penalty area. No Victory defender could make contact to get the ball away and Ben Halloran pounced to fire past Nathan Coe. It is sloppy and untypical of the Victory defending which had been quite sound to that point.

Victory came out looking for an equaliser in the second half and got it after only four minutes. Mark Mil-



Mark Milligan scores a scorching equaliser and brings the Melbourne Victory faithful to their feet. Photo: ANITA MILAS

Match Stats			
2	Saves	7	
8	Attempts on target	3	
8	Attempts off target	7	
48%	Possession	52%	
9	Corners	2	
7	Offsides	2	
18	Fouls committed	14	

ligan ran at the defence and played a one-two win Marcos Flores. Milligan picked up the return and thundered it into the far corner. Even the brilliant Michael Theo could do nothing about that shot. The keeper was immense bringing off a string of first-class saves from Guilherme Finkler, Thompson, Andrew Nabbout and Marco Rojas.

For long spells, particularly in the second half, the Roar dominated possession, taking the sting out of Victory by forcing them to chase the ball all over the park. Also the visitors pressed high up the field and had four and sometimes five men in attack, whereas Victory relied on

rebounding breaks which often foundered for lack of options as they got near goal.

Ange Postecoglou thought that Victory still lacks depth at the moment though the youngsters who have come in have contributed well. When asked if he thought fourth position was acceptable at this stage given the shaky Victory start, he characteristically put it bluntly. 'I won't accept anything less than winning the whole thing.' When I asked him about the Roar having four and five players in attack, while Victory was rebounding with only two or three at most, he replied that he was not look-

ing at numbers but more getting the Victory's structure right and dealing with its defensive frailties.

Rado Vidosic was a happier man than on his last visit to Melbourne when Heart took the Roar apart. 'Today the first goal was crucial. We survived the first 15-20 minutes, then after we scored we controlled the game. In the second half, both teams gave too many balls away.' Both the new Asian players Dong-Hyun Do and Yuji Takahashi came on late in the game for the Roar, while Victory eventually called on Nabbout and the youngster had a couple of shots near the end.

Yet the Roar mixed up their close interpassing game with a sensitive use of through balls to Besart Berisha and Mitch Nicholls, both of whom left the field after incurring injuries in the second half. Berisha and Adrian Leijer indulged in a spot of amateur night at the wrestling and the striker seemed to fall on his shoulder which left him in serious pain. He went off soon afterwards. Nicholls twisted himself badly but is not expected to miss a game as a result.

All in all this was a fair outcome for an excellent, entertaining game, but the Roar probably were happier with the result than Victory.



Brisbane Roar players rejoice after Ben Halloran broke the deadlock. Photo: DANIEL FLIS



Ivan Franjic (Roar) is unable to hold his ground as Archie Thompson and Billy Celeski apply the pressure. Photo: ANITA MILAS

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Sydney FC

0



West Sydney

2



Match Details

Sydney FC 0
Western Sydney Wanderers 2
 (Hersi 24, Beauchamp 77)
 Allianz Stadium
 Referee: Chris Beath
 Crowd: 26 176

Sydney FC: 20. Vedran Janjetovic, 2. Sebastian Ryall, 3. Fabio, 4. Pascal Bosschaart, 6. Jason Culina (10. Alessandro Del Piero '70), 7. Brett Emerton (C), 8. Adam Griffiths, 12. Blake Powell, 17. Terry Antonis, 21. Yairo Yau (22. Ali Abbas '59), 23. Rhyan Grant (9. Paul Reid '79).

Subs Not Used: 1. Ivan Necevski

Yellow Cards: Alessandro Del Piero 85.

Western Sydney Wanderers: 1. Ante Covic, 2. Shannon Cole, 3. Adam D'apuzzo, 4. Nikolai Topor-Stanley, 5. Michael Beauchamp, 6. Jerome Polenz, 8. Mateo Poljak, 13. Joseph Gibbs (9. Dino Kersinger), 17. Youssef Hersi (12. Tahj Minniecon), 18. Iacopo La Rocca (10. Aaron Mooy), 21. Shinji Ono.

Subs Not Used: 20. Jerrad Tyson.

Yellow Cards: Youssef Hersi 15th, Iacopo La Rocca 42nd, Aaron Mooy 72nd

Wanderers Triumph To Claim Derby Honours

By Magnus Lewington

Frank Farina's honeymoon with Sydney FC was cut short by an impressive Wanderer's display in the Sydney derby at Allianz Stadium on Saturday night.

After an away win against Wellington last week, the Sky Blues would have been hoping to gain momentum in their push to climb the A-League ladder.

Western Sydney had other ideas however, as an energetic display was capped off by goals in either half from Youssef Hersi and former Sydney FC defender Michael Beauchamp in a comfortable 2-0 win.

Wanderer's coach Tony Popovich commented after the match that victory over their crosstown rivals was a watershed moment for the budding Sydney outfit. Farina and his Sky Blues however will be left to rue another below-par performance, as they continue to struggle in the basement of the league table.

In front of 26 176 home fans, Sydney failed to produce the goods as Alessandro Del Piero's influence was limited to 20 minutes due to a niggling injury, and players returning from the East Asia Cup qualifiers (Emerton, Antonis) failed to make the impact needed to produce opportunities on goal. While the early exchanges proved relatively even, an organised Western Sydney defence proved too formidable for the Sky Blues attacking players.

Efforts by Adam Griffiths and Blake Powell, one a misdirected header and the other a speculative effort from outside the box, were the best that Sydney had to offer as they seemed largely toothless throughout the contest.

While FC held the majority of possession over the course of the 90 minutes, the Wanderer's pressed aggressively and energetically up the pitch and managed to fragment Sydney's play and reduce the fluency of build up throughout the



Michael Beauchamp is well positioned at the far post to drill the ball home. Photo: GREG SEATON

Match Stats			
6	Saves	3	
4	Attempts on target	9	
2	Attempts off target	7	
57%	Possession	43%	
3	Corners	6	
1	Offsides	2	
7	Fouls committed	21	

match. Despite 57% of the ball, FC only managed 6 shots (2 on goal) compared to 16 from their rivals. This was indicative of a belligerent approach by Western Sydney, as they demonstrated a real aggression and conviction in their tackling and marking in the middle of the park. While both goals came from failed Sydney FC clearances, the Wanderer's enjoyed numerous chances on goal. Ono missed the target by the smallest of margins with two efforts from outside the box, in the 17th and 30th minutes respectively. Poljak and La Rocca also threatened throughout, while a late cross by Ono was pummelled into the post to deny them a third

goal of the evening in the 79th minute. In both attack and defence the Wanderer's proved the superior side on the day, and were worthy victors against their stagnant city rivals.

In the post-match press conference, Farina once again re-iterated the necessity of consistency as Sydney aim to rebuild their season. While some encouraging signs emerged from the matches against Heart and Phoenix, the performance on Saturday night underlines the work that still needs to be done if Sydney is to become a force in the A-League. Their failure to either create chances or turn the opportunities they crafted into

goals exemplified a tired and uninspired performance. Though Farina did admit there was a possibility of latent fatigue from last week's trip to New Zealand, he asserted that for a professional and experienced group of players this is no excuse for a performance as lax as that shown by his players over the weekend. While he insisted that the Sydney players have demonstrated their capacity to play with quality and produce wins in the past, he asserted that hard work and commitment will be needed to get their season back on track.

For the Wanderer's, the win keeps them firmly in fourth place and puts more pressure on Melbourne

Victory, sitting a solitary point ahead in the table on 17.

While Adelaide and Central Coast maintained their gap on the rest of the League, if Western Sydney can continue their recent run of form they can be optimistic about their chances of a potential home final in their inaugural A-League season. The second Sydney derby once again produced an entertaining spectacle.

As the Wanderer's continue their march up the league table, the Sky Blues must dig deep and start accumulating points if they are to make an impact on the remainder of this season.



Wanderers captain Michael Beauchamp celebrates scoring against his old club. Photo: GREG SEATON



Youssef Hersi draws first blood in the second ever Sydney derby. Photo: GREG SEATON

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Argentina 3 Phoenix 1 – Carrusca Shines Again!

Adelaide United

3

Wellington Phoenix

1
Match Details
Adelaide United FC 3 (Carrusca 20'/25', Ferreira 45+2')
Wellington Phoenix 1 (Sanchez 81')
Referee: Strebrel Delovski
Crowd: 8,657 @ Hindmarsh Stadium

Adelaide United: 1.Eugene Galekovic (gk) (c), 2.Osama Malik, 3.Nigel Boogaard, 5.Iain Fyfe, 6.Cassio, 8.Marcelo Carrusca, 10.Dario Vidosic (18.Fabian Barbiero 77'), 11.Bruce Djite (21.Jeronimo Neumann 63'), 14.Cameron Watson, 22.Fabio Ferreira, 23.Evan Kostopoulos (17.Iain Ramsay 69')

Substitutes not used: 30.John Hall (gk)
Yellow Cards: Carrusca 32'
Red Cards: Nil

Wellington Phoenix: 1.Mark Paston (GK), 2.Manny Muscat, 3.Tony Lochhead, 7.Leo Bertos, 8.Paul Ifill (12.Tyler Boyd 61'), 10.Stein Huysegems (9.Benjamin Totori 68'), 16.Louis Fenton, 17.Vince Lia, 18.Ben Sigmund, 21.Dani Sanchez, 22.Andrew Durante (c) (6.Alex Smith 46')

Substitutes not used: 30.Griffin McMaster (GK)
Yellow Cards: Muscat 16', Ifill 35', Sigmund 80'
Red Cards: Nil

By Matt Mays

Marcelo Carrusca was once again the star of the show producing yet another class performance helping his Adelaide team breeze away Wellington Phoenix at Hindmarsh on Sunday afternoon.

The Argentine scored two and set up another as the Reds keep the heat on Central Coast at the top of the ladder. Wellington pulled a goal back late on before a quite spectacular double penalty save in the dying seconds of the tie from Socceroo Eugene Galekovic.

The Reds made only one change to the side that defeated neighbours Melbourne Victory last weekend, with Galekovic returning back in goal, despite appearing to be struggling in the match warm up with a suspect ankle.

After Central Coast's win the night before it was vital for the Reds to maintain the pressure and bag all three points in the penultimate game before Christmas.

Many fans were in the festive spirit with Santa hats worn around the ground as Adelaide were hoping to give Phoenix a nice Christmas roasting - and they served up a treat.

After an even opening, the game sparked to life on twenty minutes in. Paul Ifill was harshly penalised with a high foot on Ferreira. The decision proved a costly one as Carrusca whipped in the resulting free kick, missing everybody and bounced past a surprised Paston to make it one-nil. Five minutes later Carrusca doubled their lead with some magic. After some smart, quick build up play through the middle, Djite holds off two defenders and feeds the ball wide for Carrusca to control, shimmy past a defender and drive it hard and low into to bottom corner from the edge of the box. Another class piece of skill from the man in form.

Moments after the goal Phoenix's deficit should have been halved. Paul Ifill brought the ball down brilliantly on the right, beat Cassio and supplied Huysegems with a yard tap in, only for the linesman to raise his flag. Replays showed he was a yard outside - another harsh call at Hindmarsh goes against Wellington after last time out the visi-

tors were furious when Jeromino appeared to go down too easy which lead to Ben Sigmund's red card, arguable costing Phoenix the game.

Ifill struck a thunderbolt inches wide a few minutes later. But it was Adelaide who virtually killed the game off just before the break.

With Adelaide on the break Carrusca found Ferreira down the right with a delightful ball over the top. The Portuguese shaped himself to put the ball across the face but a tony deflection took his strike under the keeper. Game, set and match it seemed.

The game lost all its pace in the second half. Adelaide were quite happy to sit back whilst Wellington's negative substitutions told its own story.

Midway through the crowd stood and clapped off Djite (who signed a two-year contract extension with the Reds this week) and Jeromino stepped on as Adelaide sat on their lead and switched to a 4-5-1.

A quite un-eventful second half was brought to life though with just under ten minutes to go as the Phoenix finally found a breakthrough.

Solomon Islander Totori put in Boyd who found Sanchez in front of goal. His initial shot was closed down by the keeper but made no mistake with the follow up. But surely it seemed too little too late.

The Phoenix put in a brave effort late on but Adelaide stood firm and professional once again.

In stoppage time Wellington had a great chance to take home some pride as they were awarded a penalty after Sanchez was needlessly hauled down by Boogaard. But returning Socceroo Galekovic produced the save of the season as he spectacularly double saved from Boyd - something even Bozza Bosnich would have been salivating over!

It was the last action of the game and it certainly was a job well done from Adelaide, who seemingly didn't need to come out of 3rd gear today to beat the lacklustre Kiwis.

The aftermath of the game however left a dampener on the tie after it was alleged that a spectator racially abused Paul Ifill during the second half. Adelaide United have since then released a statement saying that they are doing all they can to help the case.

Match Stats

6	Saves	3
6	Attempts on target	10
6	Attempts off target	13
47%	Possession	53%
2	Corners	8
2	Offsides	3
15	Fouls committed	11

Argentine import Marcelo Carrusca hits a brace in the opening half hour to knock the stuffing out of the Phoenix. Photo: ADAM BUTLER



Fabio Ferreira makes his point with Adelaide United's third goal just before the break. Photo: ADAM BUTLER



Eugene Galekovic makes a sensational double save from Tyler Boyd's penalty, and practically the last kick of the match. Photo: ADAM BUTLER

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PICS OF ROUND 11

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Picture Page



It's smiles all around in the Western part of Sydney as the Wanderers do the derby deed. Photo: GREG SEATON



It's enough to make Australia Post proud, as Wanderers fans honour their Western Sydney postcodes. PHOTO: GREG SEATON



Sitting pretty at the top of the league, Mariners fans have plenty to cheer about this Christmas. PHOTO: KAREN DOUGLAS



Jonathan Bru puts a smile on the face of some happy Melbourne Victory fans. Photo: ANITA MILAS

Evan Kotsopoulos lands Fabio Ferreira a Christmas smacker! Photo: ADAM BUTLER



Japanese TV star Monkey, weaves his magic for Shinji Ono & Co. who make the Journey to the West all worthwhile. Photo: GREG SEATON



Adelaide United mascots make a song and dance about their team's super form. Photo: ADAM BUTLER



Eugene Galekovic gets the acclaim after a fabulous penalty save. Photo: ADAM BUTLER



Mark Milligan shares the joy with fans after scoring against Brisbane Roar. Photo: DANIEL FLIS



Wanderers Line Up

- Ante Covic (GK)
 - Shannon Cole
 - Adam D'apuzzo
 - Nikolai Topor-Stanley
 - Michael Beauchamp
 - Jerome Polenz
 - Labinot Haliti
 - Mateo Poljak
 - Dino Kresinger
 - Aaron Mooy
 - Tarek Elrich
 - Tahj Minniecon
 - Joey Gibbs
 - Kwabena Appiah-Kubi
 - Reece Caira
 - Youssef Hersi
 - Iacopo La Rocca
 - Mark Bridge
 - Jerrad Tyson (GK)
 - Shinji Ono, 23. Jason Trifiro
- *Six to be omitted

Ins: 19. Mark Bridge (Returns from injury) 14. Kwabena Appiah-Kubi (Returns from injury) 11.Tarek Elrich 15. Reece Caira, 23. Jason Trifiro 7. Labinot Haliti

Outs: Nil

Unavailable: Nil



Roar Line Up

- Michael Theo (GK)
 - Matt Smith (capt)
 - Shane Stefanutto
 - Matt Jurman
 - Ivan Franjic
 - Erik Paartalu
 - Besart Berisha
 - Massimo Murdocca
 - Henrique
 - Ben Halloran
 - Yuji Takahashi
 - James Donachie
 - Mitch Nichols
 - Jack Hingert
 - Matt Acton (GK)
 - James Meyer
 - Thomas Broich
 - Nick Fitzgerald
- *three to be omitted*

Ins: Nick Fitzgerald (promoted), James Donachie (returns from injury), James Meyer (promoted)

Outs: Do Dong-Hyun (knee – 2-3 weeks)

Unavailable: Nil



West Syd Wanderers v Adelaide United

By Alex Milic

Both sides are coming off two straight wins and will be looking to add to their impressive form. Adelaide United is second on the standings while Tony Popovic's Wanderers are currently in fourth position.

There was nothing between the sides in the first clash this season with a Jeronimo Neumann goal settling the scores and this encounter should be just as tight at Parramatta Stadium.

Popovic has the benefit of having all his key players available for selection. Socceroos midfielder Aaron Mooy started last weekend's Sydney derby on the bench but could force his way into the starting side, with either Mateo Poljak or Iacopo La Rocca making way.

The Reds are also at full strength and are likely to stick with the same squad that edged the Phoenix. Striker Bruce Djite has been rewarded for his strong recent form with a new two-year deal this week and will be eager to start getting in on the goal-scoring exploits of his teammates.

Classy Japanese midfielder Shinji Ono had his best game for the Wanderers against Sydney last weekend, involved in everything good the Wanderers did.

Ono had a slow start to life in the A-League but signs in recent weeks suggest the former Japanese international is ready to take the competition by storm and become one of the key players not only for the

Join the conversation on Twitter using the hash-tag #WSWvREDS

The Odds

WSW 2.87
Draw 3.35
Adelaide 2.60

Referee: Jarred Gillett

Wanderers but for the A League itself.

His play between the midfield and striker Joey Gibbs is vital to the side's chances of breaking through the strong Reds defence. In great news for the club and fans, Ono expressed his desire this week to turn his stay in Western Sydney into a long-term deal. Memo to the Wanderers board: Sign him now. Dutch midfielder Youssef Hersi scored the opener against Sydney FC last week, he says, "This game against Adelaide, at home, to get three points would be wonderful," he said. "We've got joy from this game [the derby] but tomorrow we have to think about Adelaide. Every game is tough and we must learn a

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Adelaide Acid Test For Wanderers



ABC Radio Coverage - 891 & ABC Local Radio South Australia & Grandstand Digital Adelaide and Online

lot because it will be difficult."

Hersi says, "It's unbelievable, it's good, the club has been together just five months and you can see there's a lot of passion. It feels like it's been 10 years. It's very good to see that. I want to show that I can finally play games after 1½ years, so I'm enjoying it."

Skipper Michael Beauchamp says, "We don't want to get too carried away with it," he said. "We've got another game on Friday and we're looking forward to that. We've got a couple of days off now to enjoy it and definitely get back into it on Tuesday. We'll see what game plan we're going to have there but, again, if we stick to our structure and go out there and not get ahead

of ourselves.

It's going to be a tough match but we're at home and we're looking to make that a fortress and hopefully we can do that on Friday." Watson continues run of Reds to recommit **WATSON SIGNS FOR REDS** Meanwhile, Adelaide United FC continues to roll out the player re-signings after versatile midfielder Cameron Watson became the latest to commit to the club for a further two years. Watson's re-signing follows the recent two year contract extensions of Cassio, Jeronimo Neumann, Fabio Ferreira and Djite.

Kiss of Death Wanderers 2-1AUGC

Brisbane Roar v Perth Glory

By Jarrod Ellis

Perth Glory travel to Brisbane this Friday with the chance to avenge their Grand Final defeat at the same ground and condemn Brisbane Roar to the bottom of the A-League ladder.

Despite their controversial victory back in April Brisbane have struggle this season, leading to Tuesday's shock removal of head coach Rado Vidosic.

After only three wins in eleven starts there was no question that pressure was building on Vidosic, but it still came as a surprise to many when the club announced that he would be replaced by Mike Mulvey with immediate effect.

Vidosic remains with the club, "elevated" to the newly created position of Technical Director, which incorporates work with the club owners' Pelita Jaya Cronus Football Group in Europe, South America, Asia and Australia.

Former Gold Coast United coach Mulvey will now take over the reins and was present in Brisbane from Wednesday to take training and attempt to salvage their season.

In order to reverse Brisbane's fortunes Mulvey will need to solve Brisbane's woes in the final third of the pitch, the Roar having only scored more than once on two occasions this season.

Those struggles in front of goal may very likely continue on Friday with Besart Berisha likely to miss the clash due to a shoulder injury suffered during the match against

The Odds

Roar 1.87
Draw 3.60
Glory 4.50



Join the conversation on Twitter using the hash-tag #ROARvPG

ABC Radio Coverage - Grandstand Digital and Online

Grand Final: Episode III In Mulvey We Trust?

Referee: Peter Green

Melbourne Victory.

Henrique is expected to be the man that steps into the breach, but faced with a Perth defence that includes the likes of Michael Thwaite and Bas Van Den Brink the diminutive Brazilian could find it tough going.

Mitch Nichols is another Roar player in doubt for the match but a persistent back injury may clear up in time for the attacking midfielder to take to the pitch.

Should Nichols play it could very well be one of his final appearances for the club with rumours circulating that he will be leaving in the January transfer window. Erik Paartalu has also been linked with a move away, the defensive midfield-

er rumoured to be mulling over a lucrative move to an Asia club.

Roar are no strangers to mid-season departures, however considering the current depth of the squad the loss of two key personnel could very well be the death knell for Brisbane's remaining title hopes.

Perth have so far failed to live up to expectations this season but, buoyed by a comprehensive 3-0 victory over Newcastle Jets on Friday night, courtesy of a Travis Dodd brace and a penalty to Shane Smeltz, Glory will enter the match high on confidence.

Midweek interviews with Glory players revealed that the pain of Grand Final defeat still burns in the

squad and they will no doubt relish the chance to inflict more misery on Brisbane and their fans.

Perth failed to manage a shot on target on that occasion but the West Australian club should do better this time around and Smeltz will be keenly anticipating encountering a Brisbane defence that has looked suspect in recent weeks.

In injury news Scott Jamison is expected to shrug off a corked thigh, while Japanese import Ryo Nagai could force his way onto the bench along with Steve Pantelidis who has recovered from his toe injury.

Kiss of Death Roar 1-1 Glory



Adelaide Utd Line Up

- Eugene Galekovic (gk) (c)
 - Osama Malik
 - Nigel Boogaard
 - Iain Fyfe
 - Cassio
 - Zenon Caravella
 - Marcelo Carrusca
 - Sergio van Dijk
 - Dario Vidosic
 - Bruce Djite
 - Cameron Watson
 - Iain Ramsay
 - Fabian Barbiero
 - Jeronimo Neumann
 - Fabio Ferreira
 - Evan Kostopoulos
 - John Hall (gk)
- *Two to be omitted

Ins: Zenon Caravella (promoted), Sergio van Dijk (promoted)

Outs: Nil

Unavailable: Nil



Glory Line Up

- Danny Vukovic (gk)
 - Bas van den Brink
 - Billy Mehmet
 - Nick Ward
 - Jacob Burns (c)
 - Dean Heffernan
 - Shane Smeltz
 - Liam Miller
 - Ryo Nagai
 - Travis Dodd
 - Steven McGarry
 - Chris Harold
 - Josh Risdon
 - Scott Jamison
 - Michael Thwaite
 - Lewis Italiano (gk)
- *One to be omitted

Ins: 12.Ryo Nagai (returns from injury)

Outs: Nil

Unavailable: Evan Berger (hamstring – indefinite)

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Phoenix Line Up

1. Mark Paston (GK)
2. Manny Muscat
3. Tony Lochhead
6. Alex Smith
7. Leo Bertos
9. Benjamin Totori
10. Stein Huysegems
11. Jeremy Brockie
12. Tyler Boyd
16. Louis Fenton
17. Vince Lia
18. Ben Sigmund
21. Dani Sanchez
22. Andrew Durante (C)
30. Griffin McMaster (GK).

Ins: Jeremy Brockie (returns from injury)

Outs: Paul Ifill (ankle surgery, four to six weeks)

Unavailable: Lucas Pantelis (knee injury - indefinite)

Wellington Phoenix v CC Mariners

Sat Dec 22 Westpac Stadium 3:00pm

By Joe Gallagher

They say all publicity is good publicity, but Wellington Phoenix coach Ricki Herbert might be starting to doubt that adage.

The Phoenix have hardly been off the back pages in recent times; poor performances, poor crowds, and poor results, it's difficult to pick out any positives at all from the past fortnight for the club.

A three-game string of good results now a distant memory, the nature of Wellington's play has very publicly been called into question.

Herbert, more than anybody else, will be feeling the pressure on Saturday night as league leading Central Coast Mariners come to town.

Conversely, things couldn't be much better for the table topping Mariners. One solitary loss this season has them sitting fourteen points above the side they'll play this weekend at a stadium in which they haven't been trumped since 2010.

They have in their ranks the league's leading goalscorer, most impressive goalkeeper and – in the opinion of many – best midfield duo in diminutive New Zealand midfielder Michael McGlinchey and Socceroo Tom Rogic.

Given that they've not dropped a point against the Phoenix in six games and are unbeaten in eight A-League fixtures, Graham Arnold's men will be very con-

ABC Radio Coverage - Online, coverage in National Grandstand

The Odds

Phoenix 3.75
Draw 3.40
Mariners 2.10

Join the conversation on Twitter using the hash-tag #NIXvCCM

fident of bringing another three points back to New South Wales with them on the plane on Sunday morning.

They'll need to bear in mind Wellington is a tricky trip indeed, and the Mariners will have to overcome a Phoenix side whose season is in desperate need of reinvigoration.

They too possess a potent goalscorer in Jeremy Brockie, with the striker set to overcome an injury which kept him out of the Phoenix's trip to Adelaide.

Arnold will be well aware of the threat posed by Herbert's star in Paul Ifill. The Barbadian's quiet start to the season has left him with very vocal critics, and he will

Phoenix Hope For Long Overdue Christmas Cheer



Referee: Peter O'Leary

be eager to finally make a lasting impression on the competition this term. Ifill has scored more goals in matches between these two sides than anyone else.

There may also be a spot in the starting lineup for youngster Tyler Boyd, whose impressive cameo off the bench in South Australia was very nearly rewarded with a goal, were it not for the extraordinary reflexes of Eugene Galekovic.

The injection of young attacking talent might be just what Herbert needs, given the negative feedback he has received from the club's owners this week surrounding his traditionally conservative tactics. Owner Gareth Morgan has

demanding a more attacking style, and if the steadily plummeting crowd figures at Westpac Stadium are anything to go by, the Yellow Fever faithful tend to agree.

However they must first put right their woes at the back, with a usually stingy defense having shipped fifteen goals already this season. Only two sides boast leakier back-lines in the opening eleven rounds of this term.

They will consider any result from this Saturday to be an early Christmas present indeed.

**Kiss of Death
Phoenix 1-3 Mariners**



Mariners Line Up

1. Mathew Ryan (Gk)
2. Daniel McBreen
3. Joshua Rose
4. Pedj Bojic
5. Zachary Anderson
6. Patrick Zwaanswijk
7. John Hutchinson (c)
8. Adriano Pellegrino
9. Bernie Ibini
10. Tomas Rogic
14. Michael McGlinchey
16. Trent Sainsbury
18. Nick Montgomery
19. Mitchell Duke,
20. Justin Pasfield (Gk)
21. Mile Sterjovski

Ins: 21. Mile Sterjovski (returns from injury)

Outs: Nil

Unavailable: James Oates (Ankle – 2 months)



Jets Line Up

2. Scott Neville
3. Tiago Calvano
4. Josh Mitchell
5. Dominik Ritter
8. Ruben Zadkovich
9. Emile Heskey
10. Bernardo Ribeiro
11. Connor Chapman
12. Josh Brillante
13. Sam Galloway
14. Taylor Regan
15. Craig Goodwin
17. James Virgili
18. Jacob Pepper
19. Michael Bridges
22. Adam Taggart
23. Ryan Griffiths
30. Jack Duncan (gk)
33. Matt Nash (gk)

Ins: Bernardo Ribeiro, Taylor Regan, Jacob Pepper, Michael Bridges.

Outs: Mitch Oxborrow, Andrew Hoole.

Unavailable: Ben Kennedy (knee), Ben Kantarovski (knee), Mark Birighitti (cheekbone), Jobe Wheelhouse (knee), James Brown (ankle).

Newcastle Jets v Sydney FC

Sat Dec 22 Hunter Stadium 5:30pm

By Shaun Dyas

The Newcastle Jets face Sydney FC this Saturday afternoon at Hunter Stadium with both teams and their marquee stars struggling for fitness and form.

Jets marquee man Emile Heskey has not scored since the Jets last victory back in round 6 over the Western Sydney Wanderers.

His Sydney counterpart Alessandro Del Piero has also been struggling for fitness and form as his side sit last on the a-league table and come into this match chastened by a 2-0 in the Sydney derby.

Both teams are in poor form which in a way makes this match exciting. Nobody really knows just which version of these two sides will turn up on Saturday.

One thing the Jets will have to change if they wish to kick start their season with three points on Saturday night is their style of play.

The Jets have gone from being a side intent on dominating matches through high pressing and possession to a direct and disorganised unit.

Questions are rightly being asked of Coach Gary Van Egmond as he seems to be sacrificing his philosophy in the search of competition points, which are so far elusive.

Luckily for him this week his side should have the perfect opportunity as they attempt to return to

Referee: Strebrel Delovski

ABC Radio Coverage - 1233 Newcastle, Grandstand Digital Sydney & online



Crunch Time for Marquee Stars Heskey and Del Piero

Join the conversation on Twitter using the hash-tag #JETSvSYD

The Odds

Jets 2.10
Draw 3.50
Sydney 3.75

some semblance of form.

Sydney has been poor all season in defence, with their defenders continually dropping off and inviting pressure from their opponents.

Their positioning has also been terrible. The first goal last week was an example. Former Jet Adam Griffiths made a poor read in defence as he attempted to clear, heading the ball straight into the path of Youssouf Hersi who made him pay.

They will have to be far better organised this week or Heskey may just have the perfect opportunity to return to form.

One player who must simply start

for the Jets this week is livewire winger Craig Goodwin. He came on against the Glory last week and was one of the few sparks in a listless, largely woeful performance.

As always, much of the threat from Sydney will come from their diminutive Italian superstar. When fit, Del Piero has been a shining light in an otherwise underperforming side. The question will be just how fit will the former Juventus star be for this match?

New Sydney Coach Frank Farina will be desperate to unlock the quality that resides in the rest of the side before it is too late and his team's season fades away to

nothing.

So just what will happen this weekend? Newcastle and Sydney have both been toothless in attack and porous in defence.

The fans may just be in for a treat in this one. In the earlier meeting this season the Jets went to Sydney and beat them 3-2.

Last season's meetings produced a 5-2 win in Sydney for the Jets and a final round 3-2 victory for Sydney FC at the same stadium. So goals look likely.

**Kiss of Death
Jets 3-1 Sydney FC**



Sydney FC Line Up

1. Ivan Necevski (gk)
2. Sebastian Ryall
3. Fabio
4. Pascal Bosschaart
6. Jason Culina
7. Brett Emerton
8. Adam Griffiths
9. Paul Reid
10. Alessandro Del Piero
12. Blake Powell
14. Mitch Mallia
15. Terry McFlynn
17. Terry Antonis
20. Vedran Janjetovic (gk)
21. Yairo Yau
22. Ali Abbas
23. Rhyan Grant

*Two to be omitted

Ins: Terry McFlynn (returns from suspension), Mitch Mallia (promoted)

Unavailable: Nil

Outs: Nil

Santo, Sam & Ed Podcast

Santo Cilauro, Sam Pang and Ed Kavalee are back in town with their own unique take on events of the week.

Their brief is simple - 7 days, 3 guys, no agenda.

Podcast available on iTunes

<http://itun.es/au/dOdQl.c>

Facebook: Santo, Sam and Ed

Twitter: @SantoSamEd





Heart Line Up

1. Clint Bolton (GK)
 2. Michael Marrone
 4. Simon Colosimo
 5. Fred
 6. Patrick Gerhardt
 8. Matthew Thompson
 9. Dylan Macallister
 10. Josip Tadic
 11. Richard Garcia
 13. Jonatan Germano
 14. GolGol Mebrahtu
 15. David Williams
 16. Aziz Behich
 17. Jason Hoffman
 18. David Vrankovic
 20. Andrew Redmayne (GK)
 22. Nick Kalmar
- *Two to be omitted

Ins: 13. Jonatan Germano

Outs: Nil

Unavailable: Benjamin Garuccio (ankle 3 weeks), Mate Dugandzic (broken foot - season), Vince Grella (fitness - undisclosed)

Melbourne Heart v Melbourne Victory

Sat Dec 22 AAMI Park 7:45pm



Victory Line Up

1. Tando VELAPHI (GK)
 3. Adama TRAORE
 5. Mark MILLIGAN
 6. Leigh BROXHAM
 7. Gui FINKLER
 8. Jonathan BRU
 9. Marcos FLORES
 10. Archie THOMPSON
 11. Marco ROJAS
 13. Diogo FERREIRA
 14. Billy CELESKI
 16. Theo MARKELIS
 17. Jimmy JEGGO
 19. Isaka CERNAK
 21. Spase DILEVSKI
 23. Adrian LEIJER (c)
 24. Nick ANSELL
 26. Andrew NABBOUT
 30. Jason GERIA
 39. Nathan COE (GK)
- *Five to be omitted

Ins: Spase DILEVSKI (returns from injury), Theo MARKELIS (promoted), Jason GERIA (promoted)

Outs: Nil

Unavailable: Nil

Referee: Alan Milliner



Join the conversation on Twitter using the hash-tag #MELBDERBY

ABC Radio Coverage - Updates in Big Bash Coverage on local Radio Victoria

top of Central Coast and Adelaide, as well as putting daylight ahead of the chasing pack.

Slowly and surely, as many critics and fans have pointed out, that Victory are slowly coming to grips with Postecoglou's football mantra. Apart from their bitterly disappointing loss to Adelaide, they have played consistently over the past two months.

Victory will be having Archie Thompson back on the team sheet, after being exhausted with his extensive Socceroos duty. So too will second gamer, 18-year-old defender Nick Ansell, after Postecoglou was impressed with his performance against Brisbane.

"It was a pretty big game against Brisbane. He is a pretty mature kid for his age and I thought he handled everything really well, so I see no reason to change it" Postecoglou said.

Despite having a horror night against the Mariners, Aloisi has insisted that veteran goalkeeper Clint Bolton will not lose his place in the line-up.

"He would probably have felt he could have saved them both, but we didn't lose to the Mariners because Clint let a long shot go through his arms. We lost because we were outplayed all over the pitch."

"I sat down with him and had a cof-

fee with him the following morning to reassure him" said Aloisi.

The Heart could be without Joseph Tadic, after he missed the last week's game. However, midfielder Jonatan Germano could be back in the mix after a horror run with injuries.

If the Heart are to push forward into finals contention, there will be no better team to do it against. While they might push Victory to the limits, the blue side of Melbourne has plenty to play for and won't drop more points here.

Kiss of Death
Heart 0 Victory 2

Dreaming of a Christmas derby delight

A-League Rewind



By Robert Di Fabio

It's derby week in Melbourne, with the now traditional Christmas fixture between expansion outfit Melbourne Heart and its cross-town rival Melbourne Victory.

The red and whites held bragging rights in their opening day match this season - prevailing 2-1 in-front of 42,000 spectators at Etihad Stadium - ensuring a debut victory for rookie coach John Aloisi.

While the win was a dream start for Aloisi's team, his troops have struggled since, to mirror any resemblance of the side which overhauled its city rival. In an ironic twist, Heart's floundering form has seen it spiral down the table in eighth position, while the Victory - under the tutelage of dual-championship coach Ange Postecoglou - are continuing to exhibit improvement as the season progresses, third on the table, and warming to the coach's football ethos.

In their round one meeting, Victory found it difficult to execute Postecoglou's way of playing. On numerous occasions, goalkeeper Lawrence Thomas, in tandem with his defenders struggled to play the ball competently out from the back, and often turned the ball over needlessly - ultimately resulting in the navy blues' downfall. To the Heart's credit, their game-plan was executed brilliantly. Knowing Postecoglou's possession based game from the back - and with the notion of it being a work-in-progress - Heart pressed up high on the park from the onset, allowing as little time as possible for their opponents to be composed on the ball.

Evidently, this unsettled Victory early in the piece, often causing players to hesitate and think twice when in tight spaces. To the naked eye, the Victory defence didn't look comfortable under its new playing system, and on many occasions, had the temptation to quell its coach's orders and hoof the ball long when in danger.

Now, if we fast-forward to this present day, Postecoglou's men appear to be an outfit with a grand-sense of optimism. The philosophy is coming together nicely; and while there's still room for much improvement, players are beginning to instinctively believe in the system adopted by the club.

Despite the buoyancy flowing

through the club's coaching staff, players and its fans; Victory has seemingly struggled against its arch-rival.

As it stands, the red side of Melbourne has had the wood over the blue. From the seven derbies to date, Heart leads 3-1 in head-to-head outings, with Victory's last triumph coming in December, 2010.

"They've had the wood over us," Victory captain Adrian Leijer said. "And that's not nice because we're the established club and we want to stamp our name on Victoria in a derby sense as well. We've done that in a general football sense, but now we need to do that in terms of the derby."

"So from that point of view we want to get the right result. More so for our fans because from day one since the A-League started they've been sensational."

While the derby is, effectively another fixture playing for the three points, it means much more to the players, as well as its fans. The skipper drew resemblance from the opening day loss to Heart, to the club's heartbreaking penalty shootout defeat to city-rival Sydney FC in the 2009-10 Grand Final.

"Round 1 hit us pretty hard," he admitted.

"We had a big build-up to it and it felt like we lost a Grand Final that day."

"A lot of the boys were very

dejected.

"But to the boys' credit we've worked hard, turned things around and are starting to play the brand of football that Ange (Postecoglou) wants us to play. And we know we can get better."

Meanwhile, Heart forward David Williams believes triumph in this weekend's derby could be the catalyst for a resurgence in form, and push up the table.

"There's a big build-up and there's a lot of talk about it, but this could kick off our season," he said.

The enmity between the inner-city rivals is growing each season, both on and off the pitch. Publicity through the media is gaining more and more exposure, while fans are beginning to acquire a strong sense of tribalism for their club's city. These constituents are all part and parcel of a unique derby culture.

Saturday night's encounter is sure to be welcomed by a fervent atmosphere, one which will be a fantastic advert for the A-League. If form is anything to go by, one would anticipate Victory to claim an early Christmas present for its fans, however as we've witnessed on countless occasions, football can be unpredictable at the best of times - may the best team win!

Follow Robert on Twitter @ RobertDiFabio



In the wake of the Sydney Derby, which though now two editions old is already firming as one of the A-League's eternal fixtures comes the league's original - and in my

opinion, still the best! - crosstown showdown; Melbournes Victory and Heart battle for VIC bragging rights at AAMI Park! Despite this the derby's - and the A-League in general - appeal still hasn't filtered through to many long-time football fans who have no/never had

active interest in the domestic scene at any level. Hence the Herald-Sun's Twitter #pickaside campaign to increase support for the city's A-League clubs, be it from 'Euro-snobs' or generic sports-fans. Mind you, I and many others - FFA CEO David Gallop included - firmly believe the Melbourne Derby is one of the league's showpiece fixtures as is and thus not in desperate need of such gimmicky PR but in saying that, any opportunity to give the game in Oz free and positive press should not and cannot be passed up. So if any Melbourne/VIC devotees of world football haven't yet, now's the time to #PickASide !!



We can and should feel particularly proud that our A-League and indeed, domestic football in Oz period, is generally free of racism and other forms of prejudice in comparison to overseas where it is still a nigh-endemic issue. Which makes the racist abuse directed towards Wellington Phoenix target man Paul Iffill over the weekend particularly shocking - the Adelaide United 'fans' who showed their ignorance in doing this must be identified and

punished severely by Adelaide United and the FFA, thus laying down the law to any prospective troublemakers. All the more shocking too given Paul is not just a great player but a great person who in his time at Phoenix has already become one of the league's cult figures as well as being an ambassador for Barbadian football. Although it is nowhere near a crisis issue in this country as it is abroad, complacency must be no excuse for us to not be vigilant and willing to KICK RACISM OUT of football and society in gener - **Alvaro Rodriguez**

PERTH GLORY STATEMENT

Perth Glory Football Club is aware of statements from the Australian Federal Police, together with associated media coverage, concerning the execution of warrants at a number of locations in Perth and Sydney.

Perth Glory, which is within an office complex shared with other non-related companies, was not served with a warrant, nor was its office entered by the authorities. It believes the matters relating to the execution of these warrants are not related to its business in any way.

Perth Glory will be making no further comment on this matter and is looking forward to Saturday night's game away to Brisbane Roar.



Scan the QR code to see our new television commercial! Get ready for Melbourne Heart's most exciting season yet. We've got Socceroo legend John Aloisi on board as manager and now we need you! This season our members take centre stage. Become our No.12 and together we will triumph. With 13 massive home games and a great range of membership options - it's time to play your part! Join online at melbourneheartfc.com.au or call 1300 ALL HEART (255 432).

FOR THE LOVE OF THE GAME



MELBOURNE VICTORY



PHOTO: ANITA MILLAS

2012/13 MELBOURNE VICTORY FOOTBALL CLUB

TOP ROW: 22 Julius Davies, 21 Spase Dilevski, 7 Gui Finkler, 4 Petar Franjic, 15 Sam Gallagher, 8 Jonathan Bru, 13 Diogo Ferreira
MIDDLE ROW: Assistant Coach Kevin Muscat, 16 Theo Markelis, 17 Jimmy Jeggo, 20 Lawrence Thomas, 1 Tando Velaphi, 18 Danny Allsopp, 6 Leigh Broxham, 11 Marco Rojas
FRONT ROW: 19 Isaka Cernak, 3 Adama Traore, 14 Billy Celeski, 10 Archie Thompson, Coach Ange Postecoglou, 23 Adrian Leijer, 9 Marcos Flores, 2 Matthew Foschini, 5 Mark Milligan

MELBOURNE HEART FC



SEASON 2012/13



Back Row (L-R): Tom Reddin (High Performance Manager), Jonatan Germano, Mate Dugandzic, GolGol Mebrahtu, David Vrankovic, Michael Marrone, Ben Garuccio, Belinda Pacella (Physio).
Middle (L-R): Joey Drulica (NYL GK Coach), Patrick Gerhardt, Josip Tadic, Jason Hoffman, Clint Bolton, Andrew Redmayne, Steven Gray, Nick Kalmar, Dylan Macallister, Peter Zois (Goalkeeping Coach).
Front (L-R): David Williams, Simon Colosimo, Matt Thompson, Joe Palatsides (NYL Coach), John Aloisi (Head Coach), Hayden Foxe (Assistant Coach), Fred, Richard Garcia, Aziz Behich.

Planet Football

Slovenia



By Alvaro Rodriguez

NAME: Slovenia
CAPITAL: Ljubljana
POPULATION: (2012 approx.) 2,055,496
CONFEDERATION: UEFA
INTERNATIONAL HONOURS: N/A
FIFA WORLD RANKING: 49th
EURO FINALS APPEARANCE: 2000
WORLD CUP APPEARANCES: 2002, 2010

WHO ARE YA?

The Republic of Slovenia is situated between Central Europe and the Balkans, bordered by Italy, Austria, Croatia and Hungary.

What is now Slovenia appears to be the oldest-inhabited area in its region, with archaeological finds indicating the presence of early man (Neanderthals and Cro-Magnons) some 250,000 years ago. Thousands of years later the region was home to Celtic and Illyrian tribes before its annexation by the Romans in the 1st Century BC, after which the Roman fort-town of Emona was established on the site of present-day Ljubljana. In the following centuries the area and its Roman masters were besieged by Huns and Germanic clans such as the Goths, before Slavic clans settled therein in the 600s, their legacy being the country's ethnic and linguistic identity.

Over the next half-millennia the current Slovene territory was part of a Bavarian duchy and then of the Holy Roman Empire before the Hapsburg Monarchy seized control in the 14th Century. That was soon disrupted by Ottoman Turkish expansionism which characterised the region for the next 300-odd years. Eventually in the mid-late 19th Century, the Austro-Hungarian Empire held a significant portion of Slovene land and thus would remain until WWI's outbreak in 1914. At the end of the war and the dissolution of the Empire, Slovenia joined with most of her neighbours to form the Kingdom of Yugoslavia - which would in turn collapse with the outbreak of WWII (bringing with it the hardships of Nazi and Italian Fascist occupation) and be replaced by the post-war Communist Yugoslav state helmed by Marshal Tito, who himself was partly of Slovene stock.

40-odd years later and Communist



Slovenian great Zlatko Zahovic during national team training at the World Cup in Korea/Japan 2002.

Yugoslavia along with the rest of socialist Eastern Europe collapses, albeit spiralling into the brutal Balkan genocides of the mid-1990s. Despite initial Yugoslav resistance to Slovenia's abrupt declaration of independence in 1991, it eventually relented and thus Slovenia joined the United Nations the following year, thankfully spared the mass bloodshed that would be visited upon its neighbours.

Despite some socio-economic issues, Slovenia has blossomed into a stable democracy since its independence, culminating in its membership of the European Union in 2004.

SO WHAT YOU DONE?

Upon independence and admission to UEFA & FIFA in 1992, Slovenia was not expected to make any significant impact in international football given relatively-few Slovene players had made names for themselves during the Yugoslav era, aside from Srečko Katanec. The country's debut international against Estonia, a 1-all draw, seemed to bear this out although the Slovenes' maiden win would also come against the Estonians the following year (due to its 1992 debut, the Slovenes missed the cut-off date for USA '94 qualifiers and thus Euro '96 would be their first stab at qualifying for a major tournament).

Drawn in Group 4 of Euro '96 qualifying alongside Italy and highly-fancied fellow Balkans Croatia (who went on to qualify for their maiden tournament finals) with Estonia, Lithuania and the then-raw Ukraine, the Slovenes did well to snatch 3 wins, 2 draws and score as many goals as they conceded (13), finishing second-last above the point-less Estonians. For their maiden WC campaign (France '98) they were reunited with the Croatians and fellow Balkans Bosnia-Herzegovina alongside Denmark (European champions only 4 years prior) and then-minnows Greece in Group 1. The campaign got off to a sour

start with successive 2-0 losses to the Greeks and the Danes, eventually finishing last without a win and only one draw (scintillating though it was, 3-all against Croatia with Primož Gliha the hat-trick hero for Slovenia's 3 goals) to their name.

Things got better in a big way when the Slovenes qualified for Euro 2000, their maiden tournament finals, just edging out the third-placed Greeks (winners of the next edition in 2004) by 2 points on the Group 2 ladder.

The finals would be a different story however, given a particularly-hard draw with the country who'd kept them out of top spot in qualifying (Norway) in addition to Yugoslavia (though technically Serbia&Montenegro) and the eternal dark horses Spain. Despite another 3-all thriller (against the Yugoslavs) and a 0-0 stalemate with the Norwegians, a win eluded the Slovenes and thus finished last in their group; content as they could be though with having qualified for their first-ever major tournament.

Their chances of a maiden WC finals would have seemed slim upon being drawn with the Yugoslavs again plus Russia and Switzerland for Korea/Japan 2002 qualifying, but against the odds the Slovenes upset the appcart, clinching second-place (and thus a play-off spot) in European Group 1 ahead of Yugoslavia; only the Romanians and their declining Golden Generation (Gheorghe Hagi et al) stood in their way but the Slovenes were equal to the task, triumphing 3-2 over both legs and thus were off to the Far East for their maiden turn at the big dance.

Placed in Group B with Spain (again!), Paraguay and South Africa, the Slovenes only managed 2 goals (conceding 7) and not a point to their name, with their theoretical-best chance of a win resulting in a 1-0 loss to the Saffas. With that began a barren spell for the Slovenes, failing to reach Euro 2004 (despite qualifying for the 2nd-place play-



Just in case the GPS isn't working...

offs, albeit losing there 2-1 on aggregate to Croatia), Germany 2006 (a long shot anyway given the presence of Italy, Norway and Scotland in their group) and Euro 2008 (ditto due to the Netherlands, Romania and Bulgaria).

Their South Africa 2010 prospects looked equally grim, pooled as they were in Group 3 with the Czechoslovak duo of Slovakia and the Czech Republic, Poland and Northern Ireland (thus leaving San Marino as the group's veritable minnow).

Being placed in undoubtedly Europe's most open qualifying group was no deterrent however, with the Slovenes finishing second to the Slovaks (who secured their maiden WC appearance and stuck it to their Czech brethren in the process) - all that remained was the final play-offs against the Guus Hiddink-coached Russia, with the Slovenes sneaking through on away goals due to the 2-all aggregate stalemate.

Drawn in Group C at the finals with Algeria plus the US and England (the first time since Brazil 1950 the latter two had met at a WC), the Slovenes snatched a maiden WC finals win at the expense of Algeria 1-0, then drew 2-2 with the Americans before succumbing 1-0 to the Three Lions who in doing so, shaded the Slovenes by a mere point on the ladder to progress to the second round.

Their hopes of reaching Euro 2012 however were scuppered by another hard-luck-draw which saw them grouped with Italy and Serbia plus the always-competitive Ulstermen and Estonians, with only the Faroe Islands as the definite whipping-boys. Worse still, the Estonians played out of their skins to reach the final play-offs, leaving Slovenia in the mid-table lurch.

BIG CLUBS

The country's premier club was NK Olimpija Ljubljana, which prior to its 2004 dissolution had won 4 Slovene national titles, been runners-up 3 times, won 4 cups, 1 Su-

per Cup and cup runners-up thrice more and been losing finalist in the 1970 Yugoslav Cup, having also featured in UEFA Cup and Champions League football in the '90s to boot. Since then a successor club has assumed the green/white colours and name of Olimpija, although its self-appointed successor status to the original club is not recognised by the Slovene FA.

Whilst ND Gorica has won 4 Slovene titles and 2 cups, the country's current powerhouse is NK Maribor who with its 10 titles, 7 cups and 2 Super Cups alongside its regular participation in European football in recent years, makes its high status obvious.

FC Koper and NK Domžale have also won three titles between them.

REP YOUR COLORS

Nicknamed Fantje ('The Boys' in Slovene), the Slovene NT initially wore the white/blue/red template of its national flag before (probably out of seeking a unique identity) controversially-adopting a green/white kit like that of Olimpija Ljubljana. The FA's reasoning of the national capital's team's colours being fitting for the NT didn't go down well with most, although it is fair to say it grew on them over time. For Korea/Japan 2002 a jagged-mountain motif was added across the chest of the jersey to signify the peaks of Mount Triglav, Slovenia's national mountain which appears on its coat of arms. This feature has remained to this day, with the Slovene FA recently rescinding green as the kit's main colour, instead ushering in a light-blue kit with the top line of its Mount Triglav-pattern remaining green. The away that was once white has apparently been instated as the home kit, with the new blue deputising as the away/clash strip.

As for the clubs, the post-2004 Olimpija wears green and white stripes (in the manner of Hungarian giants Ferencváros' traditional kit); Maribor wears purple and gold in a number of designs (gold tops and purple shorts is the traditional) whilst Koper wear yellow shirts with blue shorts and finally, Domžale wear all-yellow in the manner of Spanish giants Villarreal.

MATCHWINNERS

Defensive-mid/centre-back Srečko Katanec was the first Slovene player to come to prominence during the Yugoslav era; he began with the old Olimpija where he scored 10 goals in 81 games before moving on to Croatian powerhouse Dinamo Zagreb for 21 games and 3 goals - afterward he lived the dream as a player for one of Serbian/Yugoslav football's Big Two: Partizan Belgrade, the black & white half to crosstown foes Red Star. He was there for 3 years (in which time he managed 56 games for 10 goals) before moving

into the uncharted waters of Western football - the country's reformist sporting politics of the late '80s meant that stalwart/veteran (but not young) players could now move abroad to play. VfB Stuttgart were the winners of his services and despite 26 matches and 1 goal for the Bundesliga outfit, he then moved on to Italy and then-Serie A giants Sampdoria during that club's early '90s heyday, for a 5-year stay of 87 games and 12 goals, after which he retired from playing in 1994. In his international career he'd been capped 31 times and scored 5 goals for Yugoslavia (he was in fact the only Slovene in Yugoslavia's Italia '90 squad) before playing for his independent homeland 4 times and scoring 1 goal (all 4 of those caps for Slovenia came in 1994, the year of his retirement). Almost immediately he leapt into coaching, culminating in his appointment as Slovenian NT coach in 1998, and it was he who guided them to the Euro 2000 and 2002 WC finals before a brief stint with Greek giants Olympiakos, after which he successfully took charge of the Macedonian and United Arab Emirates NTs before his dismissal from the latter post in September 2011.

His heir apparent as the pin-up boy of Slovene football was attacking-mid Zlatko Zahovic, who enjoyed a varied club career with the likes of Partizan Belgrade, Portuguese sides Benfica, Vitória S.C. and FC Porto plus Olympiakos and Valencia as well as managing 80 caps (of which he is the record-holder) and 35 goals for Slovenia before retiring in 2005. His son Luka is a current Slovene Under-17 international.

Of the current crop of Fantje, they include Inter Milan 'keeper Samir Handanovic, fellow Italian-based quartet of Palermo duo Jasmin Kurtic and Josip Ilcic plus Chievo Verona left-back Bojan Jokic and Bologna midfielder Rene Krhin, the Dutch-based duo of FC Groningen winger Andraž Kirm and PSV Eindhoven's young-gun striker Tim Matavž plus the German-based duo of VfL Bochum striker Zlatko Dedic and FC Köln defender Dominic Maroh, among others.

SO WHAT NOW?

The Slovenes are currently second-last (just above Cyprus) in Group E of European WC qualifying for Brazil 2014, with Switzerland, Norway and Albania as their chief rivals for a finals berth, although the Cypriots and Icelanders have their nuisance value. Whilst certainly not the toughest qualification group the country has ever been dealt in its footballing history, the odds are still rather long that they will end up booking flights for the sun and sand of the finals in Brazil. Still, count on the Fantje to give it a red-hot go if nothing else.

Nut-Meg Dept.

Boo's World



By Mark Boric

Coaching merry-go-round is in swing in the A-League, with Rado Vidosic "moving upstairs" at Brisbane Roar, to be replaced by Mike Mulvey. Mulvey vacates the head coach job at Melbourne Victory's W-League side, which was about as interim as his spell in charge of Gold Coast United before they folded.

Racism reared it's ugly head with Paul Ifill of Wellington Phoenix suffering abuse of that nature at Adelaide United. Hopefully the culprits will be identified and punished. The

former Millwall player may have played if front of some rough types at The Den, but I wonder if he knows that he should count himself lucky having visited Adelaide without being murdered and his body being hidden in a barrell in a dis-used bank vault?

It was bragging rights for West Sydney as the won the Derby on Saturday, taking the points and outsinging their rivals at their own home whilst doing so. Such was their delight, they didn't even boo when Dino Kresinger was subbed on!

I'm not saying Harry Kewell is getting desperate, but I've heard he's been googling a few of those websites that find UK lower league/semi-pro players clubs in Australia. Make of that what you will.

Melbourne sports broadcasting icon Tony Charlton passed away during the week. An AFL Hall of Fame inductee, his stint fronting GTV-9's coverage of the Victorian State League in the mid-1970's was not often listed amongst his impressive career



Football fans we hope to avoid this season...

highlights like VFL Grand Finals and Olympic Games. Whilst very few recordings of television shows were kept in that era, hopefully one day some more soccer from that time will be unearthed and find it's way to YouTube where it could be enjoyed by all. Maybe it needs someone with some clout from the FFV to get Channel Nine to help in this regard?

The FFV did release it's fee

schedule for 2013 last week, with some increases in player and team registration fees. I wonder if fees will be cut across the board for those clubs that make up the "Community Leagues" under the NCR reforms?

It's a shame Jonatan Germano is still injured, it is that time of year he keeps a Santa Hat down his shorts in case he scores, and the Melbourne Derby would have been a grand stage for that.



Football fans we can't avoid this season... It's a jungle out there! Meow!!

AGAINST ALL ODDS

A-League	This	Last
Champion 2012/13	week	week
Central Coast Mariners	4.00	4.50
Adelaide United	4.75	6.00
Melbourne Victory	6.00	5.50
Perth Glory	9.00	19.0
Brisbane Roar	9.00	11.0
Wellington Phoenix	17.0	15.0
Newcastle Jets	19.0	23.0
West Sydney Wanderers	26.0	34.0
Sydney FC	19.0	41.0
Melbourne Heart	26.0	41.0

NYL Leadership Changes Hands Once Again

By Daniel Quinn

The top three changed once again after Round 9 of the National Youth League (NYL) with the Central Coast Mariners and the Melbourne Heart filling the top two spots as the Victory dropped to the third, while Adelaide continue their rise up the table.

At Burton Park on Saturday Adelaide United came from two goals down to defeat the Newcastle Jets 3-2 thanks to an Awer Mabil hat-trick. Newcastle opened the scoring on just ten minutes as Marko Jasic converted from the spot after Reds 'keeper John Hall took Jasic down in the box.

Jasic was involved five minutes later in the Jets second as he thumped a strike towards goal only for Hall to parry into the path of Kale Bradbery who simply finished extending Newcastle's lead.

But on 27 minutes the Reds got one back through Mabil's first as the lively winger drove into the bottom corner, before the 17-year-old equalised tapping home Aleks Vrteski's fumble three minutes later.

Just before the break Mabil completed his hat-trick ensuring Adelaide turned around the scoreline as the man of the moment burst down the right flank before emphatically beating Vrteski.

Perth Glory trounced the Western Sydney Wanderers 5-1 at Intiga Stadium that included five different goalscorers for the Glory.

Japanese winger Ryo Nagai got the scoring under way with a stunning curling strike into the top corner just after four minutes.

Jesse Makarounas doubled the lead just before the break on the counter with a neat left foot finish, but the scoring wasn't over in the first-half as Ndumba Makeche slotted past Wanderers 'keeper Thomas Manos in first-half stoppage-time.

Perth took their impressive first-half performance into the second with Brandon O'Neill striking bril-



Melbourne Heart are up to second spot on the standings after defeating the Mariners 3-0.

liantly from distance seconds after the resumption.

Makarounas then setup Moses Kalau on 74 minutes with the latter finishing nicely.

Daniel Barac got one back for the visitors heading past Glory 'keeper Lewis Italiano but that can only be seen as a consolidation.

The Melbourne Heart defeated the Central Coast Mariners 3-0 on Saturday thanks to another Joshua Groenewald brace.

Central Coast dominated early, but Adam Kwasnik was sent off for dissent on 34 minutes that changed the whole game as three minutes before the half-time break Stefan Mauk

found the bottom corner from the edge of the area.

Groenewald, backing up from a brace last weekend, doubled the advantage finishing past a stunned Mariners 'keeper David Bradasevic after the ball struck Groenewald's hand.

The Heart Skipper then completed his brace with a powerful free-kick which Bradasevic had no chance of stopping.

The AIS grabbed their first points of the season in the 2-2 draw with Sydney FC at Cromer Park on Sunday. On the stroke of the half-time whistle the Institute took a 1-0 lead as Sydney 'keeper Anthony Bouzanis and

Todd Norris collided before the ball came off Norris and trickled into the empty net.

But early in the second-half half-time substitute Alex Urosevski equalised with a terrific left foot finish. Just after the hour Scott Galloway's free-kick drifted into the corner without a touch giving the AIS the lead. Christopher Naumoff though equalised for the Sky Blues in spectacular fashion driving brilliantly into the top corner to share the points.

The Melbourne Victory lost top place of the NYL table after receiving a 6-1 thumping by Brisbane Roar on Sunday.

The Roar found their first early in the second-half with James Meyer

slotting into the net after a nice one-two with Nick Fitzgerald.

Kwame Yeboah then scored a quick fire brace dispatching a penalty he earned, before emphatically firing past Victory shot stopper Luke Radonich.

Kenneth Dougall extended the lead to four on 71 minutes from the spot after Sam Gallagher fouled the tall midfielder inside the box.

Substitute Anthony Proia then ran onto a long ball over the top and buried the fifth, before Patrick Theodore finished into the bottom corner rounding out Roar's scoring.

Julius Davies did grab a late consolation with a fantastic finish, but all to no avail.

Round 9 Results

Melbourne Victory 1 (Julius Davies 90+1)
Brisbane Roar 6 (James Meyer 50, Kwame Yeboah 53pen, 57, Kenneth Dougall 71pen, Proia 86, Theodore 90)

Sydney FC 2 (Uroveski 51, Naumoff 74)
AIS 2 (Norris 45, Galloway 62)

Melbourne Heart 3 (Mauk 42, Groenewald 60, 78)
Central Coast Mariners 0

Perth Glory 5 (Nagai 4, Makarounas 43, Makeche 45, O'Neill 46, Kalau 74)
Western Sydney Wanderers 1 (Barac 78)

Adelaide United 3 (Mabil 27, 30, 40)
Newcastle Jets 2 (Jesic pen 10, Bradbery 15)

NYL Standings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	P
1 CC Mariners	9	7	0	2	20	11	9	21
2 Melbourne Heart	9	6	1	2	20	11	9	19
3 Melbourne Victory	9	6	0	3	25	12	13	18
4 Adelaide United	9	4	2	3	22	16	6	14
5 Brisbane Roar	9	4	1	4	20	16	4	13
6 Newcastle Jets	9	4	1	4	22	18	4	13
7 Perth Glory	9	4	0	5	20	20	0	12
7 Sydney FC	9	3	1	5	22	23	-1	10
9 WS Wanderers	9	2	3	4	11	21	-10	9
10 AIS	9	0	1	8	8	42	-34	1

Round 10 Fixtures

AIS v Central Coast Mariners
AIS Athletics Track
Saturday 22 December KO 3:00 PM

Adelaide United v Western Sydney
Burton Park
Saturday 22 December KO 3:30 PM

Newcastle Jets v Sydney FC
Wanderers Oval, Broadmeadow
Sunday 23 December KO 10:30 AM

Melbourne Heart v Melbourne Victory
John Cain Memorial Res, Thornbury
Sunday 23 December KO 3:00 PM

Brisbane Roar v Perth Glory
Goodwin Park, Yeronga
Sunday 23 December KO 4:00 PM

All KO times ae AEDT



W-League Wrap



Roar Comeback Takes All The Glory

By FFA

There was no shortage of goals and drama in Round 9 of the Westfield W-League with champions Canberra United undone at home by a Melbourne Victory injury-time winner, while Perth Glory rewrote the record books with a stunning 7-5 win over Sydney FC.

Perth remain two points clear at the top with Brisbane Roar edging Western Sydney Wanderers 2-1, however the Glory have now moved five points ahead of traditional big guns Canberra and Sydney with just three rounds remaining.

Down 2-1 at the interval, there was little sign of what was to come at Allianz Stadium as Perth scored three goals within a five-minute spell just after the break in a second half that included an incredible nine goals.

Lisa De Vanna led the way for the visitors bagging a treble, while Elise D'Ovidio scored twice within 60 crazy seconds as the Glory suddenly went 4-2 up.

It was the most goals the Glory have scored in a match, and indeed the most goals witnessed in a Westfield W-League match.

Most remarkably though, it is little more than 12 months since the Glory last visited Sydney FC when they suffered a record-breaking 11-0 defeat.

Meanwhile, Brisbane Roar took an outright hold on second with their 2-1 win at Western Sydney Wanderers on Sunday. Two quick-fire goals midway through the first from Tameka Butt and Emily Gielnik set the Roar on their way.

The Wanderers upped their intensity but could only manage to



Ruth Wallace rounds the Newcastle Jets keeper to double the lead and make it 2-0 to Adelaide United. Photo: ADAM BUTLER

pull one back as Louise Fors fired home a sweetly-hit free-kick in the second half.

Melbourne Victory sit proudly in third after the inspirational Jessica Fishlock broke Canberra hearts with a winner deep into injury time.

The two sides had earlier exchanged goals through firstly the Victory's Amy Jackson, with Jennifer Bisset replying for Canberra.

At the other end of the table, Adelaide United snapped a harrowing seven-match losing streak with a 2-0 win over Newcastle Jets.

Second half goals from debutant Kristy Moore and defender Ruth Wallace shored up a much-needed win for the Lady Reds who leapfrog their opponents in the process.



Kristy Moore scores for the Lady Reds. Photo: ADAM BUTLER



Adelaide United's Kristy Moore gives the thumbs up to one of her little admirers. Photo: ADAM BUTLER

Round 9 Results

Canberra United 1 (Jennifer Bisset 50')
Melbourne Victory 2 (Amy Jackson 31', Jessica Fishlock 94')

Adelaide United 2 (Kristy Moore 67', Ruth Wallace 70')
Newcastle Jets 0

Sydney FC 5 (Kyah Simon 41', Emma Kete 43', Lillie Billson 62', Caitlin Foord 81', Sam Kerr 92')
Perth Glory 7 (Lisa De Vanna 13', 72', 87', Alvi Luik 56', Elisa D'Ovidio 60', 61', Kate Gill 87')

Western Sydney Wanderers 1 (Louise Fors 68')

Brisbane Roar 2 (Tameka Butt 21', Emily Gielnik 27')

W-League Standings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	P
1 Perth Glory	9	6	1	2	26	14	12	19
2 Brisbane Roar	9	5	2	2	15	12	3	17
3 Melbourne Victory	9	5	1	3	16	9	7	16
4 Canberra United	9	4	2	3	16	12	4	14
5 Sydney FC	9	4	2	3	23	20	3	14
6 WS Wanderers	9	4	1	4	16	12	4	13
7 Adelaide United	9	2	0	7	8	27	-19	6
8 Newcastle Jets	9	1	1	7	10	24	-14	4

Round 10 Fixtures

Melbourne Victory Vs Western Sydney
Wanderers
Wembley Park, Box Hill
22 Dec KO 2:00pm

Brisbane Roar Vs Adelaide United
AJ Kelly Park
22 Dec KO 3:00pm

Perth Glory Vs Canberra United
Intiga Stadium
22 Dec KO 4:00pm

Newcastle Jets Vs Sydney FC
Wanderers Oval
23 Dec KO 4:30pm

All KO times ae AEDT

Couch Potato

* ALL TIMES ARE AEDT



SBS ONE
Sunday December 23rd
 10:30 am **Football Asia**
 11:00 am **FIFA Futbol Mundial**

Monday December 24th
 11:00 pm **The World Game**

SBS TWO
Monday December 24th
 9:30 pm **The World Game**



FRIDAY 21ST DECEMBER
 Bundesliga Mid-Season Review
 7:00pm 1st Airing

SATURDAY 22ND DECEMBER
 nPower Championship Round 23
Blackpool v Wolves 6:40am **LIVE**
 Eredivisie Round 18 **AZ v Twente**
 9:20am 1st Airing
 Blue Square Premier Round 21
Grimsby v Wrexham 5:10pm 1st Airing

SUNDAY 23RD DECEMBER
 SPL Round 19 **Celtic v Ross County** 1:55am **LIVE**
 nPower Championship Round 23
Crystal Palace v Huddersfield
 4:15am **LIVE**
 Eredivisie Round 18 **NAC v PSV**
 6:40am **LIVE**
 nPower Championship Round 23 **Leicester v Cardiff** 8:45am 1st Airing
 SPL Round 19 **Kilmarnock v Hibernian** 11:40pm **LIVE**

MONDAY 24TH DECEMBER
 Eredivisie Round 18 **Utrecht v Ajax**
 1:40am 1st Airing
 SPL Round 19 **Hearts v Dundee Utd**
 3:25am **LIVE**

TUESDAY 25TH DECEMBER
 nPower Championship Round 23
Highlights 7:00pm 1st Airing
 SPL Round 19 **Highlights** 7:30pm 1st Airing
Eredivisie Round 18 Highlights
 8:00pm 1st Airing

WEDNESDAY 26TH DECEMBER
 nPower Championship Round 23
Nottm Forest v Leeds 11:10pm **LIVE**

THURSDAY 27TH DECEMBER
 SPL Round 20 **Dundee v Celtic**
 6:25am **LIVE**

FRIDAY 28TH DECEMBER
 SPL Round 20 **Highlights Show**
 7:00pm 1st Airing



Saturday 22nd December 2012
 03:00 am Magic Of The FA Cup - Arsenal Greatest Players

Sunday 23rd December 2012
 03:30 am FA Cup Classics Leicester City V Tottenham
 Hotspur 3rd Round 05/06
 09:00 am Football: Liverpool TV (Rpt) Liverpool V Aston Villa

Tuesday 25th December 2012
 09:30 am Magic Of The FA Cup - Leeds Utd Greatest Players
 10:30 am Liverpool TV - Season 69
 01:30 pm FA Cup Classics - Barnsley V Chelsea 6th Round 07/08

Thursday 27th December 2012
 03:00 am Magic Of The FA Cup Manchester United - Greatest Goals

Friday 28th December 2012
 03:00 am FA Cup Classics - Manchester City V Leeds United 4th Round 99/00
 03:30 am FA Cup Classics - Arsenal V Bolton Wanderers 4th Round Replay 93/94



ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE LIVE
 Times listed are 7 minutes prior to kick-offs.

English Premier League
 Sat Dec 22 Wigan v Arsenal
 11.38 pm Fox 1
 Sun Dec 23 Manchester City v Reading
 1.53 am Fox 1
 Sun Dec 23 Newcastle v QPR
 1.53 am Viewers Choice
 Sun Dec 23 Southampton v Sunderland
 1.53 am Viewers Choice
 Sun Dec 23 Tottenham v Stoke
 1.53 am Viewers Choice
 Sun Dec 23 West Brom v Norwich
 1.53 am Viewers Choice
 Sun Dec 23 West Ham v Everton
 1.53 am Fox 3
 Sun Dec 23 Liverpool v Fulham
 4.23 am Fox 1
 Mon Dec 24 Swansea v Man Utd
 12.23 am Fox 1
 Mon Dec 24 Chelsea v Aston Villa
 2.53 am Fox 1

Thu Dec 27 Sunderland v Manchester City
 1.53 am Fox 2
 Thu Dec 27 Manchester United v Newcastle
 1.53 am Fox 3
 Thu Dec 27 Everton v Wigan
 1.53 am Viewers Choice
 Thu Dec 27 Fulham v Southampton
 1.53 am Viewers Choice
 Thu Dec 27 Norwich v Chelsea
 1.53 am Viewers Choice
 Thu Dec 27 QPR v West Brom
 1.53 am Viewers Choice
 Thu Dec 27 Aston Villa v Tottenham
 4.23 am Fox 3
 Thu Dec 27 Stoke v Liverpool
 6.38 am Fox 3
 Thu Dec 27 Reading v Swansea
 10.30 am DELAY (Fox 3)

Sat Dec 29 Sunderland v Tottenham
 11.38 pm Fox 1
 Sun Dec 30 Manchester United v West Brom
 1.53 am Fox 1
 Sun Dec 30 Aston Villa v Wigan
 1.53 am Viewers Choice
 Sun Dec 30 Fulham v Swansea
 1.53 am Viewers Choice
 Sun Dec 30 Reading v West Ham
 1.53 am Viewers Choice
 Sun Dec 30 Stoke v Southampton
 1.53 am Viewers Choice
 Sun Dec 20 Norwich v Manchester City
 1.53 am Fox 2
 Sun Dec 30 Arsenal v Newcastle
 4.23 am Fox 1
 Mon Dec 31 Everton v Chelsea
 12.23 am Fox 2
 Mon Dec 31 QPR v Liverpool
 2.53 am Fox 2

Hyundai A-League
 All games **LIVE**
 Fri Dec 21 Western Sydney v Adelaide
 7.00 pm Fox 1
 Fri Dec 21 Brisbane v Perth Glory
 9.00 pm Fox 1
 Sat Dec 22 Wellington v Central Coast
 3.00 pm Fox 1
 Sat Dec 22 Newcastle v Sydney
 5.30 pm Fox 1
 Sat Dec 22 Melb Heart v Melb Victory
 7.45 pm Fox 1

Round 12: ASK THE EXPERTS

THE VERDICT

Wanderers (3) Adelaide (3) Draw (2) - Roar (4) Glory (0) Draw (4) - Phoenix (1) Mariners (5) Draw (2) - Jets (3) Sydney FC (2) Draw (3) - Heart (0) Victory (8) Draw (0)

SANTO CILAURO
22

Wanderers
Roar
Draw
Jets
Victory

Last week: 3

CRAIG MACKENZIE
26

Draw
Draw
Mariners
Draw
Victory

Last week: 3

EDDIE KRNEVIC
21

Draw
Brisbane
Draw
Jets
Victory

Last week: 4

PETER KATHOLOS
21

Adelaide
Draw
Mariners
Sydney FC
Victory

Last week: 3

ROGER SLEEMAN
30

Adelaide
Roar
Mariners
Draw
Victory

Last week: 3

ANDY HARPER
22

Wanderers
Brisbane
Wellington
Draw
Victory

Last week: 2

JOHN DOYLE
26

Adelaide
Roar
Mariners
Sydney
Victory

Last week: 4

KISS OF DEATH
23

Wanderers
Draw
Mariners
Jets
Victory

Last week: 3

All Nations Cup 2012

www.goalweekly.com



Serbian captain Zoran Vukas surrounded by team-mates as he holds up the trophy.
 Photo: JOHN PUNSHON



Player of the Tournament:
 Carl Recchia (Scotland).
 Photo: JOHN PUNSHON

Epic Finale to 27th All Nations Cup

By Norm Edgar

The final of the 2012 All Nations Tournament was played last Sunday at the Knox Regional Football Centre between the holders Scotland and Serbia in what proved to be a great final.

Scotland with a team containing many experienced players had Stuart Webster back in goal after missing the semi-final. As in previous games Scotland started well and scored in the 12th minute through Caleb Nichols who volleyed home. But then the game had a moment that gives coaches nightmares when Stuart Webster was sent off when he came of his line to thwart a Serbian attack but brought down Milos Lujic in the penalty area.. Down to ten men and looking to

bring on the reserve goalkeeper Dan Pritchard, it was realized that the team sheet did not include him. The left back John McLuskie had to go in goal. From the resulting penalty Zoran Vukas scored the equaliser.

But Scotland were not going to be denied and despite being one man down went ahead in the 30th minute when Luke Sherbon scored. The game was quite even and Serbia came back again when Milos Lujic the top scorer in the competition scored in the 42nd minute. In another twist Scotland came right back and right on half time Luke Sherbon scored his second from a penalty after Caleb Nichols was felled in the penalty box to send Scotland into the half time break in the lead 3-2.

The second half turned out to

have a classic end. Both teams were struggling to get on top and finally Scotland increased their lead when Caleb Nichols got his second with a simple tap in and Scotland's fourth in the 77th minute. At this point the trophy was being regaled with dark blue ribbons with seemingly a Scotland win. But then the last ten minutes changed everything. Scotland might have relaxed, after all they only had ten men and surely they were tiring. Serbia were not about to give in and Goran Zoric was about to imprint his name on proceedings and in the 82nd minute he scored when Scotland pushed up too far and ran through to beat John McLuskie with ease to bring it back to 4-3 to Scotland.

Then from a free kick Brado Obradovic scored in the 86th minute.

Its now 4-4. In a dramatic last few minutes with both teams looking for a winner Serbia finally got the winner when Goran Zoric scored in the shadows of full time when he outsprinted the defence, cut in to the centre and shot that hit the top right hand corner to beat John McLuskie and give Serbia a 5-4 win.

It is congratulations to both teams for a great game which provided a great finish to the tournament and we can only look forward to next year to continue the tradition.

Final: Serbia 5 Scotland 4

Man of the Tournament:
 Carl Recchia (Scotland)

Golden Boot:
 Milos Lujic (Serbia)

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Rogic our Soccerroo superstar elect



BETTER late than never to jump on board the Tom Rogic bandwagon so move over Australia because here I come.

The 20-year-old superstar-to-be and cult hero among Central Coast Mariners fans and expectant Soccerroo supporters will likely cringe while reading this, which is a measure of how well-grounded is this young man from the Canberra suburb of Griffith.

But if a peek at his resume is not enough to alert you to the fact that this is a special talent then watching him glide past opponents and send a perfectly weighted pass into the path of a teammate leaves you in no doubt.

And there's more to his talent than that. He can put his foot down and press the accelerator in an instant and leave hardened defenders and midfield markers in his wake.

He's quick to seize a shooting opportunity and he's not easily muscled off the ball. Strength, poise, vision and execution have rarely in recent times been found in such a youthful package.

It's exciting. It's really exciting. And the timing could not be better. Given that doubts about the next generation of Soccerroos have surfaced since South Africa 2010 it is inspiring to wonder about Rogic's prospects and the levels he may attain.

After just 20 A-League appearances Rogic made his Soccerroo debut against South Korea last month and followed up with game time in this month's East Asian Cup qualifiers in Hong Kong.

But it's not just on the field that this midfield maestro excels. He's also taken the term "unassuming" to new heights ... em, if you get my meaning.

"I've got a long way to go but it's been unreal so far, a bit crazy really, to play a few A-League games then play for the Soccerroos," said Rogic after a Mariners training run on Tuesday.

"But I don't want to get too far ahead of myself."

That's easier said than done when lauded by football writing luminaries such as Ray Gatt in The Australian, who recently wrote that Rogic "is one of the most hyped young talents this country has produced, and a player who may well have the world at his feet."

Everyone wants a piece of the most precocious talent on these shores. Understandably so.

Both overseas and local suitors are ready to pounce come January's transfer window knowing that at the end of the current season this extraordinary talent is out of contract.

And when pressed about his next move, he doesn't get flustered. He remains completely in control and acknowledges how important the Mariners have been to his develop-

ment.

"My immediate future is at the Mariners. They're a great bunch of guys and we've got a great coaching staff here. It's a really well structured club both on and off the pitch and I'm glad that I've been given the chance to play here," said Rogic.

"We work really hard for each other and we're a very close group of players. After all I see these guys more than I see my family."

But at the end of the season Rogic may have to say goodbye to his second family. When he finally sits down to assess his options with agent/manager and ex-Soccerroo Andrew Bernal, he'll likely head overseas.

For now though he's simply in the moment, enjoying being part of the unique Mariners' culture.

Last Sunday three of his teammates – Patrick Zwaanswijk, Troy Hearfield and Adriano Pellegrino – went fishing with two Mariners fans.

Earlier this year, Merrillie Redden won a competition via the club's official facebook page for a chartered fishing experience with a number of Mariners players and opted to take her good friend and fellow Mariners enthusiast, Erica Harker, with her.

It's a little bit different but it's part and parcel of being a Mariners player and Rogic and his teammates readily accept this.

"Yeah, during the pre-season I was part of a promotion for Pink Ribbon Day to raise awareness about breast cancer and all of the lads get involved in different promotions off the field.

"It's a good club and we try and do the right thing by the community." Much has been made of Rogic's futsal background given that he played his first futsal international for Australia back in 2010 but futsal was simply a diversion albeit an enjoyable and rewarding one.

"Yeah, some media stuff makes me out to be a futsal player who started playing normal football only in the last couple of years but that's not true. Futsal was always a temporary thing for me," said the ex-ANU and Belconnen star.

"I didn't get into the AIS or any of the national junior teams a few years back and my career sort of stalled for a couple of years. That's when I started playing futsal but that finished when I joined the Mariners."

He admits to casting an envious glance as our Futsalroos and his former futsal teammates competed in the world championships in Thailand in early November but there was no chance for him to participate.

"Yeah, the thought did cross my mind but my commitments with the Mariners wouldn't allow it. Club requirements come first."



And if Rogic is playing his final season with the Mariners he's determined to go out in style.

"There's certainly a real confidence at the club at the moment given our recent results.

"Our number one aim is the championship and I see no reason why we can't go on and do it and I'd like to think that we can get into the Grand Final as well but that's not what we're thinking about right now."

No sir, not at the Mariners where you'll soon get told to pull your head in if necessary.

Right now all thoughts are focussed on Saturday's tricky trip to windy Wellington where once again Rogic will come in for his fair share of attention.

"I didn't start off this season too well and I never had the impact that I thought I'd have."

That may have been a consequence of his breakout season last season but with the help of teammates and coaching staff he dealt with the situation and is again turning heads whenever he's in possession.

"I have more freedom to move now and I'm really enjoying the role."

Sorry to be the bearer of bad tidings for Phoenix.

Dean goes Green again
DEAN Hennessey was appointed coach of Victorian Premier League powerhouse Green Gully on Monday night.

In keeping with club protocol Hennessey agreed a one-year deal and the club also confirmed the appointment of Paul Harris as assistant coach, Robert Brian as goalkeeping coach and Stefan Rudzki as strength and conditioning coach.

Harris and Brian are well versed in the Gully culture while Rudzki, who recently spent time with Tottenham Hotspur, is highly regard-

ed in sports science circles.

"This is definitely the biggest job I've had and it represents a fabulous opportunity to work with a professionally run organisation. I'm really looking forward to this challenge," said Hennessey.

"On paper the squad looks pretty healthy with plenty of experience and ability and my priority right now is to work with the players we have."

"Down the track if additions are required then I'm confident that the club will support me in bringing any in."

Hennessey is the only coach to have won promotion to the VPL with four different clubs – Essendon, Richmond, Bentleigh Greens and Southern Stars.

Last year he defied the odds by avoiding relegation from the elite league with newly promoted Southern Stars after many pundits had tipped the Turkish-backed outfit to return to State League One.

Hennessey defeated an impressive list of candidates after being one of four short-listed for the coveted Green Gully position.

"We always attract plenty of interest. We're never short of people," said Gully general manager Raymond Mamo.

"This is one of the hardest clubs to coach to be honest because the only guy with all the pressure on him is the senior coach."

"But we're very excited with Dean's appointment. We looked closely at his input and experience with (player development) academies and we're hoping that his influence will filter down throughout our junior set-up as well."

Hennessey also sees player development as an important part of his role.

"I've always prided myself on giving youngsters an opportunity if they are good enough and if that situation arises at Green Gully



Left: Goal! Weekly bringing you tomorrow's news today. Soccerroo starlet Tom Rogic as he appeared in Canberra's ANU colours, in a Football Focus segment compiled by Russ Gibbs which featured in GW way back in July 2010.



Above: George Campbell (right) and a Man City fan.

Right: New Green Gully head coach Dean Hennessey.

then all well and good."

Hennessey is a close friend of 2012 VPL Coach of the Year Chris Taylor and views Dandenong Thunder's success under Taylor as the benchmark for the rest of the league.

And while he'd never admit it he'll probably also be keen to take on Bentleigh Greens which controversially dumped him after he'd led them back into the VPL in 2009.

For the most part Hennessey's VPL journey has been about squaring up to better resourced opposition but now he finds himself in charge of the club with the most financial clout in the league.

"I'm fully aware of the club's expectations and I aim to fulfil them," said Hennessey.

Stark contrast facing Michael
LAST season he was in Victorian club Richmond's under-18 B side. Now he's closing in on signing a professional contract with a Scottish Premier League side.

That's what confronts 18-year-old goalkeeper Michael Stark who is one of many good news stories to emerge from this year's Melbourne Football Stars European tour.

"It's got me beat how Michael went unnoticed here," said MFS principal and South Melbourne legend George Campbell.

"Rangers were impressed with him but they had a lot of keepers so he's currently trialling with Hibs then he's going to Motherwell."

"I've got reason to believe that Motherwell are very interested and I think there could be a real opportunity there."

Campbell's optimism may be fuelled by persistent rumours that current No. 1, Darren Randolph, could be sold during January's transfer window as he is one of 11 players at Fir Park who are out of contract at the end of the season. There's talk that current No 2 Lee

Hollis will take over leaving manager Stuart McCall looking for another keeper.

"Michael's only been a goalkeeper for about three years and although this is a massive jump for him I think he's a real chance," said Campbell.

"He's got the basics right and that's what they're looking for in the UK. His angles and his positioning are good and he has the ability to come out and take the ball in the air. They don't look at shot-stopping ability as such."

"The other thing he's got going for him is he's 194 cm and they won't look at you there if you are under 192 cm."

Campbell's tour group headed to the UK last month before touring Germany and Spain then returning to Melbourne.

His squad lost two games (3-2 to Bolton Wanderers and 2-1 to Spanish outfit CF Mollet), drew two (with the Scottish Youth FA select and Aberdeen's under-17 academy side) and won two (2-1 wins over German club FC Deisenhofen and Spain's Club Esportiu Jupiter).

"Again it was a great learning experience for all of us," said Campbell.

"The boys now understand what's involved in becoming a professional footballer. You can talk about technical programs all you want but hard work comes first."

"I'd be delighted for young Michael Stark if he gets a contract because in a sense it would vindicate what we do."

"We take boys that have either missed the system or have simply been overlooked."

And there are plenty of youngsters in those categories. Just ask current Young Soccerroo star Jackson Irvine at Celtic, one of many to have made it after being shunned by our traditional development pathways.



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Another local derby: the Old Firm in Glasgow

Blast From The Past



By Roy Hay

In only three years Melbourne Victory and Melbourne Heart have created a tradition all of their own with a stirring local derby in A-League. The 42,032 fans who crammed into Etihad Stadium for the Round One clash this year created an atmosphere which was not unlike that at some of the great local derbies around the world. The oldest of these—one that still evokes the same passion today—was probably the clashes between Rangers and Celtic in Glasgow which began in 1890-91 in the first season of the Scottish League. Rangers finished second in the league and Celtic third behind Dumbarton.

By the early 20th century the clubs had begun to dominate the league championship and the Scottish Cup and had become known as the 'Old Firm' for their sedulous pursuit of the money to be made from

their rivalry. Rangers gradually became associated with the protestant and unionist majority of the Glasgow population, while Celtic carried banners for the catholic minority and those of Irish ancestry, particularly those who favoured independence from the United Kingdom. It was an explosive mixture at times and matches between the clubs were sometimes punctuated by violence between their respective supporters.

In 1909, however, when the clubs met in a Scottish Cup final replay a misleading newspaper report led the fans to believe that extra-time would be played if the match again finished level. When that did not happen the fans rioted in unison against the authorities, burning the pay-boxes at Hampden Park and stoning the firemen who arrived to put out the conflagration. The cup was withheld and the clubs warned about their future behaviour. Since then the fans have tended to take their ire out on each other. My grandfather captained Celtic in that Old Firm derby in 1909.

But it would be wrong to concentrate on the negatives of this rivalry for it has produced some wonderful games of football and it is at least arguable that the existence of this conflict on the football field has acted as a safety valve for passions and political intransi-

gence compared to Northern Ireland. Others would disagree and insist that Scotland would be better off without Rangers and Celtic bringing religious, social and political divisions to the fore every year. The clubs themselves have exploited the situation in the past, but in recent times have done an enormous amount to reduce social tensions. Rangers long ago gave up their explicit refusal to sign Catholic players and Celtic have distanced themselves from the wilder extremes of Irish nationalism.

The dominance of the top league by a pair of opposed teams is not unique to Scotland, of course. Real Madrid and Barcelona in Spain, Dinamo Zagreb and Hajduk Split in Croatia, Sporting and Benfica in Portugal, Galatasaray and Fenerbache in Turkey have all had long periods of pre-eminence and derbies have been the key matches in the season. Again there is a case to be made that a more open, more even competition would be beneficial to the game in each country and certainly those leagues where the outcome is less certain have a special attractiveness.

Enough of the social analysis what about the football? Over the years I have attended many Old Firm derbies and watched many more on television. Jimmy Johnstone and Kenny Dalglish stand out as Celtic

players in my memory, while Willie Henderson and Ian McMillan do likewise for Rangers. Older Celtic fans remember a seven-one victory over Rangers in the Scottish League Cup final in 1957. Rangers fans celebrate the years when Rangers carried all before them in the 1980s winning the league nine teams in a row to equal what Celtic had done in the 1960s and 1970s under Jock Stein. Those were the years when Graeme Souness, Paul Gascoigne and Brian Laudrup lit up Ibrox Park. Mark Viduka and Craig Moore played in several Old Firm derbies in their spells at Celtic and Rangers respectively.

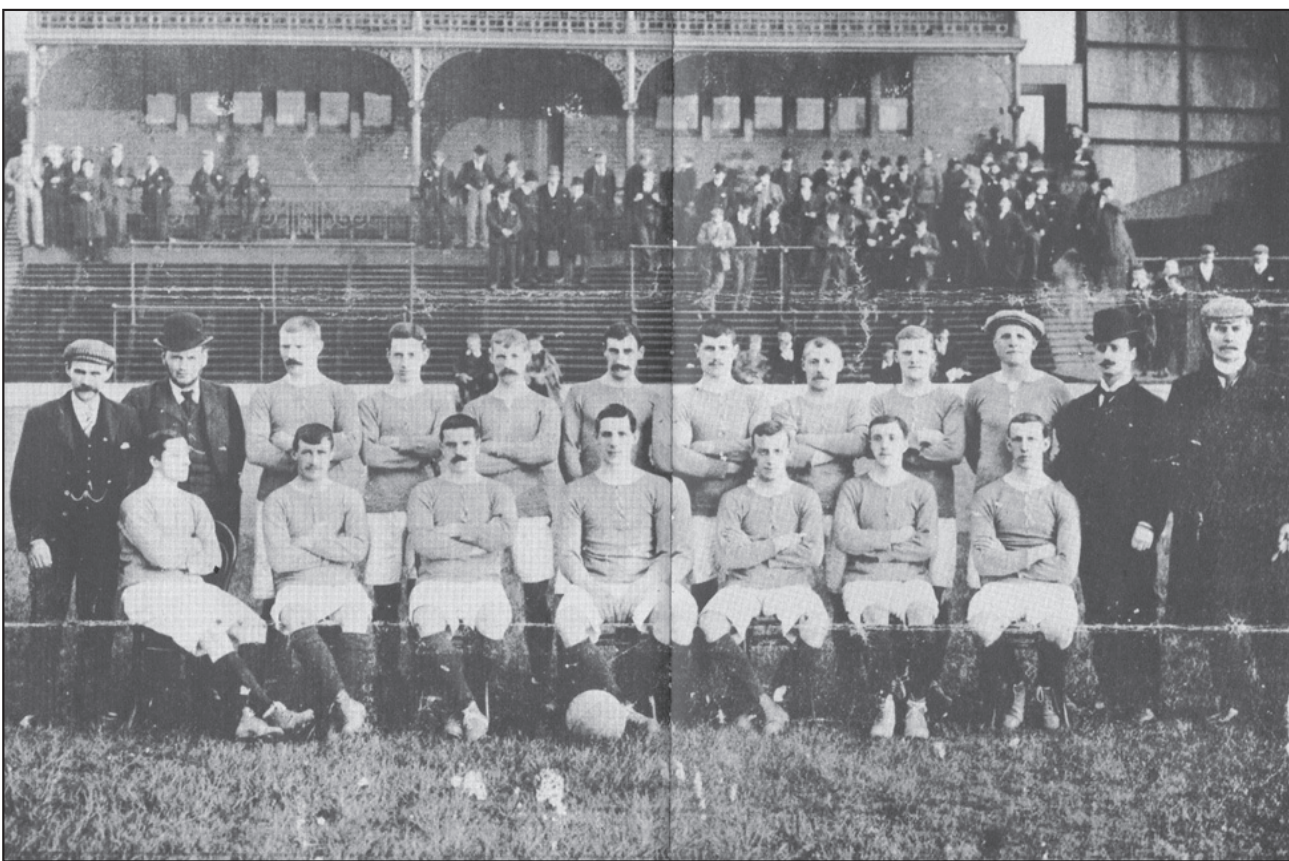
I have good memories and bad ones of the Old Firm. I was lucky that I was at an Ayr United game when there was a catastrophe at Ibrox Park in which 66 fans died after they fell down a steep open staircase at the end of an Old Firm match. Anyone who wants to know more about the history of this famous derby rivalry should turn first to the works of Bill Murray, whose book *The Old Firm: Sectarianism, Sport and Society in Scotland*, John Donald, Edinburgh, 1984 was the first serious treatment of the relations between the clubs in a broad context. He has three more books on the subject.



Referee Bill Anderson tries to calm Bobby Lennox (left) and Ron McKinnon during a tense moment in an Old Firm game in 1973. Source: Rodger Baillie, ed., *Playing for Celtic*, No. 5 Stanley Paul, London, 1973, p. 65.



Two greats of the Scottish game, Sandy Jardine (left) of Rangers and Danny McGrain of Celtic lead their teams out for an Old Firm game in 1975. Source: Hugh Taylor, *The Scottish Football Book*, No. 21, frontispiece.



Rangers in 1901 when they won the Scottish League for the third time in succession. Source: Hugh Taylor, *The Scottish Football Book*, No. 21, Stanley Paul, London, 1975, pp. 120-1.

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FIFA World Club Championship	
Final - Sun 16/12/12	Yokohama, Japan Att: 68,275
Corinthians (Brazil) 1 - 0 Chelsea (England)	
(Paolo Guerrero 69')	
3rd Place Final - Sun 16/12/12	
Al Ahly (Egypt) 0 - 2 Monterrey (Mexico)	
Semi-finals	
Wed 12/12/12 Al Ahly (Egypt) 0 - 1 Corinthians (Brazil)	
Thu 13/12/12 Monterrey (Mexico) 1 - 3 Chelsea (England)	
5th Place Final - Wed 12/12/12	
Ulsan (Korea) 2 - 3 Sanfrecce Hiroshima (Japan)	
Quarter-finals - Sun 09/12/12	
Ulsan (Korea) 1 - 3 Monterrey (Mexico)	
Sanfrecce Hiroshima (Japan) 1 - 2 Al Ahly (Egypt)	

Goal! Weekly - Friday 21st December 2012

Passion and dedication on display as
Corinthians are crown Club World Champions

By Daniel Quinn In Tokyo

I recently returned from the Club World Cup in Japan where Copa Libertadores winners Corinthians edged out UEFA Champions League winners Chelsea 1-0 at the International Stadium Yokohama in a truly magnificent night of football with 68,000 plus watching.

The game wasn't the greatest as Jose Paulo Guerrero headed the Brazilians to their second Club World Cup,

but the best part of my experience in Yokohama was with the fans of both sides.

Despite Chelsea's large Japanese contingent, the Corinthians fans outnumbered the Blues with thirty thousand-plus of their loud and passionate supporters who didn't stop throughout the ninety pushing their beloved side over the line.

In fact I heard a story from a Corinthians fan when departing Tokyo who informed me about how some Brazilians quit their job back in South America to make the trip to Japan since their annual one month holiday didn't fall while Corinthians took part in Asia, showing their passion and dedication for their club.

There were also reports of some fans selling their cars so they can afford the trip to Japan, a massive decision for football fans from a poor county like Brazil.

While in Japan the Corinthians fans, know as "Fiel" meaning Faithful in English, made locals aware that they were in town as many of them showed their colours in the streets of Tokyo and Yokohama in the days prior to the Final.

On Sunday, the night of the Final, before arriving at the home of the Yokohama F. Marinos the Corinthians fans marched the streets of Yokohama from Shin-Yokohama Railway Station for over a kilometre until they reached the International Stadium Yokohama where they still

chanted and showed their passion with flags waiving on the outskirts of the stadium before moving inside.

Meanwhile the Chelsea supporters ensured they had local territory at the local pub a short walk from the International Stadium Yokohama getting in early at 1pm with kick-off not until 7.30pm.

The Blues fans sang their heart out, as the pub was happy to take plenty of their money. Those Chelsea fans included some who travelled from England, Hong Kong, Mongolia, Cyprus, China and even some from Brazil. But the loudest of the Blues fans would have to be the Chelsea FC- Australian Supporters Club with many travelling from Adelaide, Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane

and Perth.

As the Chelsea supporters marched to the stadium and made their way to the International Stadium Yokohama the Fiel screamed and chanted abuse towards the Chelsea supporters, but the Blues fans weren't afraid to do the same in return.

While inside the stadium before kick-off the Corinthians continued to chant, jump and hurl abuse at any fan in a Chelsea top as both sets of supporters grabbed their pre-game refreshments.

The Japanese locals also got into the act with the majority of locals in Blue shirts, but some wore the White and Black of Corinthians as the Fiel were happy to allow

the locals to chant on their side.

With the game under way the thirty thousand Corinthians fans continued to wave flags and white balloons in every corner, while they sang as one.

Some supporters even had to sit with opposition supporters, including a small group of Corinthians fans that sat at the South end, the end where the Chelsea active didn't stop with their waving flags and chants. At least one Corinthians fan, however, was removed from the stadium for refusing to refrain from waving his flag that also resulted in the flagpole being snapped into two.

When Guerrero did eventually net the winner on 69

minutes the Corinthians erupted with all fans in White, Black and Red sent into jubilation, while flares were pulled from pockets and lighted before shown to the skies.

Twenty minutes later the final whistle was blown as the Corinthians fan erupted the loudest that had all night, while the Chelsea fans that travelled half the globe were left shattered, before quickly leaving ensuring their safety.

From both sets of fans some of this behavior can be seen as disrespectful, but in fact it's passion, dedication and after all it's all part of the South American and European Football culture.

2012 Champions Decided



Millonarios, the team that was a stepping stone for Alfredo di Stefano on his way from River Plate to Real Madrid 60 years ago, have ended a 24-year wait for a record 14th Colombian league title.

The team from Bogota beat Independiente Medellin 4-3 on penalties at their El Campin stadium on Sunday after a 1-1 draw in the second leg of the Clausura championship final. The first leg had ended 0-0 in Medellin on Wednesday but away goals are not taken into account.

Goalkeeper Luis Delgado converted Millonarios' sixth penalty then saved Medellin's sixth taken by Andres Correa. Each side had missed one earlier spot kick in the shootout.

Millonarios took the lead just before half time through Wilberto Cosme but were pegged back when Medellin's William Zapata scored from close range after the break.

The hosts started the match much the brighter and went within inches of taking the lead inside 10 minutes when Otalvaro Arce hit the post.

Arce collected a cross-field pass on the edge of the penalty area before cutting inside and letting fly a curling shot which cannoned off the wrong side of the far post with the Medellin goalkeeper well beaten.

The warning seemed to spark Medellin into life and they finally began to get a foothold in the game, enjoying more possession and attacking with pace at the other end.

Indeed Zapata could have had a clear run on goal but was denied by a last ditch challenge on the edge of the area midway through the half.

Sebastian Hernandez then almost forged a chance out of nothing when his acrobatic volley from 10 yards flew just wide of the post.

Medellin's players were looking so comfortable it came as somewhat of a surprise when Millonarios took the lead, one minute from half time.

Following a bad clearance the hosts pushed forward and the ball was eventually crossed from the right for Cosme to smash into the roof of the net from close range.

The goal sent the capacity home crowd into delirium as they began to dream of a first championship since 1988.

DIM came out after the break on the front foot and scored the equalizer on 51 minutes with Zapata following in his saved shot to bundle the ball into the net



Libertad lifts the Paraguayan trophy for 2012. PHOTO: JORGE ADORNO

from a yard.

However the jubilations among the players came at a cost as Felipe Parde was shown a second yellow card for what seemed like an over-celebration in front of the Millonarios supporters.

The hosts almost took immediate advantage when the put the ball in the net but the goal, but to the disbelief of the players the goal was ruled out for offside.

With the visitors down a player they had to withstand a late siege from Millonarios but some confident goalkeeping and brave defending kept the Bogota giants at bay while on the break, and on set pieces, Medellin always looked a threat.

The visitors did well to hold on to penalties but were left heartbroken as Correa missed the decisive kick.

The balance of power in Colombia has shifted back to the capital this year after a quarter of a century. Millonarios' arch-rivals Independiente Santa Fe won the Apertura championship in the first half of the season, their first title since 1975.

Millonarios, who had won their last title in 1988, enjoyed a golden era midway through the last century.

Leading Argentines including Di Stefano, one of the all time greats, left their country during a players' strike in 1948 to continue their careers in Colombia and were nicknamed The Blue Ballet. Di Stefano then joined Real Madrid in 1953.

The Paraguayan Clausura

championship went to the wire on Sunday with Libertad lifting their 16th title with a last-day 2-0 home win over Sportivo Luqueño to finish three points clear of Nacional.

BIANCHI RETURNS TO BOCA

New Boca Juniors coach Carlos Bianchi said Wednesday he will try to convince popular midfielder Juan Roman Riquelme to return.

The mercurial Riquelme left the club five months ago after Boca lost the final of the Copa Libertadores to Brazilian club Corinthians.

Bianchi spoke at Boca's La Bombonera, two days after the 63-year-old was named to replace Julio Falcioni.

"We know the importance of Roman," Bianchi said. "When he puts on the Boca shirt, he gives his all. I'll try to speak with him. He's an important piece."

Riquelme, who also played in Spain with Barcelona and Villarreal, left the club following a reported personality conflict with Falcioni. He is a talented playmaker, but can also be temperamental.

Bianchi is the most successful coach the club has ever had, and will be under pressure with Boca's demanding fans expecting him to bring titles immediately. He has been away from coaching since a short and unsuccessful stint with Spain's Atletico Madrid that ended in 2006.

This will be Bianchi's third stint

coaching Boca. He won the Copa Libertadores three times with the club, and also won Latin America's top club title with fellow Buenos Aires club Velez Sarsfield. In addition, he won four league titles with Boca.

"These are difficult things to repeat," Bianchi said. "We'll try to be successful."

After speaking to reporters, Bianchi stood on the sidelines at La Bombonera and addressed about 5,000 fans.

"We'll work as hard — or harder — than we did before," he said, acknowledging wild applause.

Bianchi's first league game will be Feb. 10 against Quilmes, and he said he signed a three-year contract.

Boca's great Buenos Aries rival River Plate hired Ramon Diaz as its new coach just over two weeks ago. Like Bianchi at Boca, Diaz is River's most successful coach. In two previous stints he won seven trophies — five league titles, the Copa Libertadores and the South American Supercup.

"Every coaching change brings hope," Boca midfielder Walter Erviti said. "This is even truer when it's someone like Bianchi."

The gathering of Boca fans was peaceful — a sharp contrast to the violence that broke out a week ago when club hooligans celebrating Boca "fan day" vandalized shops in the city centre and charged police lines. Police used water cannons to disperse crowds, and chased down others on foot with dozens arrested around the city's famous obelisk



Millonarios avenge their trophy drought by winning Colombia's Liga Postobon



All aboard the Boca team bus as Bianchi takes helm at the wheel once again

monument.

LIBERTAD CROWNED IN PARAGUAY

Libertad scored 44 goals during the Clausura campaign with the strike pairing of José Ariel Nuñez and Pablo Velázquez contributing to just over half of that total.

The two players are rather different in style — Nuñez is a workhorse and runs himself into the ground every game but he doesn't lack ability and uses his pace to get in behind defenders and is a top finisher.

Velazquez offers different problems, he likes to receive the ball with his back to goal and bring players in around him, a much more physical player. Together they were too good for everybody with Libertad only failing to score three times.

For several years Libertad have had the best youth system in Paraguay by a long stretch, it really came into play in the Clausura when the APF introduced a foreign-player limit. In contrast to Olimpia who had little resources to call upon, the Gumarelo have such a strong squad made up of Paraguayans they had no problem adapting to the new rule. It isn't just the aforementioned attacking duo but also the defenders Gustavo Mencia, Ismael Benegas and Nery Bareiro who were crucial in the tournament.

In the last six games Libertad scored after 2 minutes twice and after 3 minutes in another game — pre-

vious to that they had scored after 3 minutes against Tacuary and were two goals up after 11 minutes against Nacional. Those early goals acted as a pressure-release and it meant they didn't struggle like Guarani and Nacional in the run-in.

Both the 2011 Clausura and 2012 Apertura were dominated by the traditional top two who were playing some tremendous football at times and really raised the bar. Without wanting to take away from the Guma's achievement there is no doubt that this was one of the worst Olimpia sides in a long time, winning just two matches outside of Para Uno and getting beaten 4-1 on three separate occasions to Cerro Porteño, Nacional and incredibly Carapeguá.

As for Cerro Porteño they were distracted by the Copa Sudamericana and their last chance of winning the domestic championship was blown when they were beaten by Libertad in a tense game.

The final showdown was between three managers — two that had been players in 2011 and then the man who had four Paraguayan titles to his name and had just revived the fortunes of the El Salvador national side.

Ruben Israel had been there and done it all before and it showed, this was his fifth league championship with the Gumarelo having previously won in 2007, both the Apertura and Clausura in 2008 before taking the 2010 Clausura which until Sunday was Libertad's most recent trophy.



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London Calling



By Samuel Collins

The saying in football goes 'Nothing is surprising anymore', but the events on Tyne-side on September 27th caused everyone's eyebrows to rise. Alan Pardew's eight-year contract extension with Newcastle United bewildered many. The 51-year old was only 18 months into a five-and-a-half year deal he penned when he replaced Chris Hughton back in 2010, which only increased the intrigue further. Chief scout Graham Carr also signed with the club until 2020, and managing director Derek Llambias insisted the deals were to "keep the club progressing on and off the pitch", but the 2012-13 campaign hasn't gone as planned.

Newcastle have won just 4 league games this season. Saturday's defeat at home to champions Manchester City made it 6 losses in the last 7 games, leaving Pardew's men just two points above the relegation zone. Before the turn of the year, the Toon face clashes against Manchester United, Arsenal and a revitalised Queens Park Rangers. They have 17 points from 17 Premier League games. At this stage last season they had 27 points. The previous year they had 22 points. When Newcastle were relegated from England's top-flight in 2008-09, they had more points (19) after 17 games than they have now.

Toon fail to repeat heroics



Time Will Tell: In theory, Magpie boss Alan Pardew has 8 years to bring success to St James

These are, indeed, very worrying times for the club.

"We're in a dogfight," Pardew admitted on the weekend. So why has it all gone wrong so far this season? Repeating the heroics of last year's fifth place finish was always going to be tough, but key injuries have hindered Newcastle's form. The club currently sit top of the 'Premier League injury table' with seven absentees. The groin injury suffered by the outstanding Yohan Cabaye has restricted Pardew's options greatly - the French international has started just 10 of Newcastle's 17 league games - while supremely talented playmaker Hatem Ben Arfa has failed to sustain his fitness too. Any side in the division would miss the quality of such midfielders, particularly when, like with Newcastle, their replacements aren't in the same class. Summer signing Vernon Anita (£6.7m from Ajax) has struggled to adapt to the pace of English football - though

he was impressive against Man City - while Romain Amalitano (Free transfer from Reims) has yet to make a league appearance. Versatile duo Ryan Taylor and Dan Gosling are out for the season with injury, leaving Pardew's possibilities in the middle of the field threadbare. Right-back James Perch has even had to play in central midfield of late.

And the problems don't end there, up front, Newcastle have two strikers in completely contrasting form. Demba Ba has 11 league goals, but his Senegalese team-mate Papiss Cisse has just 2 in 15 games. The latter looks a shadow the player who netted 13 in 14 last season after joining for £10m from Freiburg in January. If only Pardew could find a way to get both firing, though, the ex-Southampton coach might not even have Ba come February. It is well known that the 27-year old has a release clause of £7m, and the likes of Chelsea and Arsenal have been linked with the

former Hoffenheim forward - it would be surprising if Ba was still wearing black and white after next month's window.

Since signing that staggering extension three months ago, Pardew has managed just 2 wins in 12 league games, though, the Englishman has slammed reports that he has taken his foot of the pedal, as a result of the deal, as "ridiculous." While many believe demotion to the Championship is improbable given the strength of Newcastle's first eleven, if not the squad, previous seasons in the Premier League era have shown that resting on your laurels can often backfire. West Ham's 2002-03 side - Jermain Defoe, Joe Cole, Michael Carrick, Paolo Di Canio et al - didn't survive, while Newcastle themselves were relegated in 2009, despite Michael Owen, Obafemi Martins, Jose Enrique, Shay Given etc all present on Tyneside.

However, there are worse teams than Newcastle this season. Their



Senegal striker Demba Ba.

fierce neighbours Sunderland are in turmoil, while Reading, QPR and Wigan are all struggling. But Pardew will hope the second half of the campaign sees the club climb the table - something they're more than capable of. The January transfer window also offers Newcastle the chance to improve their roster, with Pardew looking for "one or two", as he revealed earlier in December. Carr's ability to identify potential across the globe is notable, and the talent spotter will probably be getting one or two anxious calls from eccentric owner Mike Ashley and Pardew next month, as the club seek to turn their wretched form around. Defeat against Harry Redknapp's improving QPR side on Saturday would really increase the fears on Tyneside.

"There's not a lot wrong with us," an adamant Pardew insists. Only an upturn in results can prove the manager's faith.



By Alex Milic

Putting the ugly scenes of the Under 21 clash behind them, the Serbia Football Association and the English FA hosted technical exchange seminars recently with the UEFA Study Group Scheme's fifth season in full swing.

The scheme, which began on the initiative of UEFA President Michel Platini, sees member associations visit one another to share knowledge, experience and best practice in coach education, youth, women's and grassroots football. A total of 51 seminars are taking place this season - 15 on elite youth football, 13 on coach education, 13 on grassroots football and ten on women's football.

Some 1,700 football technicians from throughout Europe are taking part in this season's seminars, which are being hosted by 31 different associations. Serbia, Hungary, Bulgaria and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are new hosts for the 2012/13 campaign.

The Football Association of Serbia (FFS) were proud hosts of a seminar on elite youth football, which drew guests from Italy, Moldova and Azerbaijan. Theoretical and practical sessions, featuring nation-



Participants from the study group at the Serbian FA HQ.

al youth team players, were held in the Sports Centre in Stara Pazova on the first day. During the second day, the participants were invited to see how Serbian clubs FK Crvena zvezda and FK Partizan nurture their young talented players.

Zoran Lakovic, general secretary, Football Federation Serbia (FFS) says, "Our technical staff had the opportunity to obtain new knowledge and to introduce that knowledge within the practice of our organisation. We believe that all of the visiting delegations returned to their countries richer for another positive experience."

Lakovic says, "It was our aim to present the Serbian football school in a comprehensive way," added national teams director Savo Milošević. "We presented the programme of work with the national teams, the way of testing, and the selection criteria that our association is implementing. We visited

the two most successful clubs in Serbia and the two most famous schools - FK Crvena zvezda and FK Partizan - the teams that have the most players in the youth national teams of Serbia."

Grassroots football was on the agenda at another successful seminar in England, which was attended by delegates from the Swiss, Austrian and Belgian associations. The visitors heard about the Football Association (FA) Charter Standard, under which the FA has established a quality grassroots control system that recognises and rewards the clubs that are well run, sustainable, and which place paramount importance on children's protection, quality coaching and safety.

The seminar in England also saw a visit to an FA 'Mash-Up' session - a programme aimed at 14 to 17-year-old boys and girls who have dropped out of football or are close

to doing so. The project enables them to play football away from club structures in a relaxed way, in order to rediscover the pleasure of football. These sessions are based on enjoyment rather than on competition, and take place after school in five-a-side centres.

A third key element of the grassroots seminar in England was a visit to an FA Skills Programme session. The project is aimed at five to 11-year-old children, with the general goal being not only to improve the children's football skills, but also to have a healthy activity and to give them confidence. The FA emphasised that the player was the focal point of all such projects.

Elvedin Begi will serve a four-year term as president of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Football Federation (NFSBiH) after being elected to the post at the association's assembly in Sarajevo.

At the association's assembly in

Sarajevo, a new executive board was constituted, comprising 15 members. In accordance with the NFSBiH statutes, the presidents of the entity associations, Mile Kovacevic (FF RS BiH) and Mato Jozic (FF F BiH), directly joined the committee.

Begic will serve a four-year term as NFSBiH president. In recent years, he served as vice-president of the NFSBiH normalisation committee. Darko Ljubojević and Ivan Beus will serve as association vice-presidents.

Following a proposal by FIFA and UEFA, delegates at the assembly unanimously approved the establishment of a mediation committee consisting of six members, including four of the normalisation committee - Ivica Osim, Sead Kajmaz, Duško Bajević and Faruk Hadžibegić, with the two remaining members to be chosen at a later stage.

IN OFF THE POST

mailbag@goalweekly.com

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Dear Goal! Weekly,

Got to say though that last week's 'Balkan Wrap' by Alex Milic was complete nonsense. I've never read such a one-eyed biased reporting of an issue in my life. I watched that game he's talking about and was appalled by the behaviour of so-called Serbian fans. To suggest that the English FA would be favoured compared to a little country like Serbia shows a complete misunderstanding of the facts.

The English FA will be favoured because their players were attacked by Serbian officials and players and their black players were racially abused throughout the match and for the temerity of celebrating a goal. Yes, the celebration was in was in front of Serbian fans, but in a ground where the English following was minimal, if any, where were they supposed to go? Just walk back to half-way?

To suggest that the crowd may have been just booing Rose for his 'immature' reactions after his send-off and aggressive and unsporting like behaviour is completely ridiculous and shows a UEFA-like response of pretending it didn't happen. It did. And it was racially motivated. Sadly this is still a common occurrence in the Balkan states that are copying scenes (thankfully removed) from the English game in the 70's and 80's. The fact that your columnist seems to feel the need to defend what can only be described as offensive and puerile behaviour from a team and set of supporters that should have been dragged across the coals and banned from European football is a smear on your otherwise excellent magazine and Alex's usually very insightful comments on the game in that part of the World.

This, I believe, is part of the endemic malaise within UEFA that sees them sweep racism under the carpet as it's not convenient for them to fix the problem in Eastern Europe. Rant over.

D.Collins, Sydney



Scenes from last week's U21 clash between Serbia and England, which has raised debate.

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Wrap

By Andrew Bishara

“Super-Crisis” not over yet

He called it the “super-crisis”. It’s the idea that when everything is going against, then everyone is going to turn against you. When you are expected to deliver, then you don’t.

“We have to go beyond that and focus on the way we play football. Have we been in crisis? It depends on what you mean by a crisis. If you call it being slaughtered by everybody, then we were in super-crisis.”

That was Arsene Wenger after his side demolished Reading 5-2 at the Majeski Stadium. After every critic and fan witnessed Arsenal’s loss to League Two side Bradford in the League Cup, Arsenal needed, no, had to beat Reading.

Never before has Wenger come under such intense scrutiny. He needed his side to bounce back. They did, three goals in the first 35 minutes. Five by the end of the time. A hat-trick by Sant Cazorla and one a piece by Lukas Podolski and Theo Walcott.

“At 4-2, I saw your headlines coming,” Wenger said. “Fortunately, we scored a fifth goal. At 4-0 we thought, subconsciously, it was done. We lost our focus and we paid for it. But it was important to play our football.”

Their football, Wenger says, suffered because of their perceived crisis they were having. Their game based on “movement and



The Christmas period will be critical to Wenger’s title aspirations.

technical quality and that demands freedom of initiative” suffers “when you are in a crisis.”

This “super-crisis” might not be over thought for Wenger. This has happened before for Arsenal. They suffer a crisis of confidence, drop games when they shouldn’t, the fans protest and demand head roll. Then they win, blow away a team and suddenly, they are over the dark times.

Now comes the Christmas period, probably the most intense period in the football calendar. Over a timespan of eleven days, the Gunners (like the rest of the league of course) will play four games. They face Wigan, West Ham, Newcastle and finally Southampton.

Given the difficulty of the Premier League, none of these games will ensure points for the Gunners. Wigan has proven to be a bogey team in the past; West Ham is a Sam Allardyce team; Newcastle are better than most and sooner or later, will explode into life this season and Southampton are always dangerous, especially given their footballing mantra.

If Arsenal is truly to bury their crisis, they will need to grab as


many points as they can. Of course that is easily said than done. Gunner fans are baying for blood at the moment and any fault from their beloved team will see them bring out the knives again.

More so, given that the winter transfer window is opening up. Rumours are circling that Wenger has a transfer kitty of around £40million to purchase new players this January, including Crystal Palace’s Wilfried Zaha, Liverpool goalkeeper Pepe Reina and West Ham’s Mohamed Diame.

Then there is Walcott-Gate. The England international has yet to sign a new contract extension and could leave this January, if he doesn’t. It seems Walcott’s hesitation lies not on a pay-rise, but on wanting to play as striker, not on the wing. Talks are ongoing, but to lose another player, especially given the improvement of Walcott this season, would be another blow to Wenger. And then there will be another “super-crisis”.

ENGLAND

EPL



Last 5 games

Most recent first

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	
1 Manchester United	17	14	0	3	43	24	+19	42	W W W W W
2 Manchester City	17	10	6	1	33	15	+18	36	W L D W D
3 Chelsea	16	8	5	3	28	17	+11	29	W L D D L
4 Tottenham Hotspur	17	9	2	6	30	25	+5	29	W L W W W
5 Arsenal	17	7	6	4	31	18	+13	27	W W L D D
6 Everton	17	6	9	2	28	21	+7	27	D W D D D
7 West Bromwich ...	17	8	3	6	24	21	+3	27	D L L L W
8 Norwich City	17	6	7	4	19	25	-6	25	W W W D D
9 Stoke City	17	5	9	3	15	13	+2	24	D D W W W
10 Swansea City	17	6	5	6	26	22	+4	23	L L W W D
11 West Ham United	17	6	5	6	21	20	+1	23	D L W L L
12 Liverpool	17	5	7	5	23	23	+0	22	L W W L D
13 Fulham	17	5	5	7	28	29	-1	20	W L D L L
14 Aston Villa	17	4	6	7	15	24	-9	18	W D D W D
15 Newcastle United	17	4	5	8	19	26	-7	17	L W L L L
16 Sunderland	17	3	7	7	18	24	-6	16	L W L L D
17 Southampton	16	4	3	9	22	32	-10	15	W L D W W
18 Wigan Athletic	17	4	3	10	18	32	-14	15	L D L L L
19 QPR	17	1	7	9	15	30	-15	10	W D D D L
20 Reading	17	1	6	10	21	36	-15	9	L L L L L

EPL Preview.
Now, just as Arsenal have or don’t have any money to spend; or they do have and don’t want to spend, Liverpool manager Brendan Rodgers has openly admitted that the club don’t have the financial resources to “spurge”.

“There is no doubt we will get reinforcements in and there is no doubt that we will get the backing, but it will come down to two things - the availability and affordability of players,” Rodgers told ESPN.

However, he has made his ambitions clear that he wants more attacking players during the transfer window, to help lessen to load on the Luis Suarez. A host of players have been linked to the club, including Arsenal’s Theo Walcott.

“There is no doubt that we want to bring in goals and we want to bring in players who can assist in scoring goals.” said Rodgers.

And his wish might come true, according to reports by ESPN. It is said that a £12 million has been finalised for Chelsea’s Daniel Sturridge. The England international has had a tough time at Chelsea, rarely given the chance to play, and been consistently been left on

the bench. The reason: Fernando Torres is in the team and he’s (sadly) the first name on the team sheet.

However, his arrival at Liverpool, if it proves to be true, will definitely help Rodgers’ team, who this week will look to bounce back from their humiliating 3-1 defeat to Aston Villa.

A day after the beating West Ham 3-2, Rodgers admitted that his side’s ambition was beyond the “top four” and had his eyes settled on Manchester City.

“We’re 11 points off second and that can all turn round very quickly. We need to get consistency. That’s what we’ve got at the moment”.

That came quickly crashing down, when Aston Villa visited Anfield last week and delivered one of the shocks of the season. So much so, that even Rodgers admitted that he was taken by the performance.

“It was a bad day at the office,” said Rodgers. “We’re very disappointed and, I’ve got to be honest, I didn’t see that coming. Our momentum and confidence coming into the game was as high as it’s been”

“We had chances early on and didn’t take them. We could easily have been 3-0 up in the game but we didn’t make the final pass or have that big of quality in the top end of the field.”

Now, they will have the chance to get back on the winners board when they welcome Fulham to Anfield this weekend. The Cottagers have been their regular inconsistent self this season; showing moments of brilliance, while succumbing to poor performances.

They sit one place behind Liverpool on the table and last week became the first team this season to lose to QPR: a stigma that surely will live through this season. Fulham defender Aaron Hughes admitted they let themselves down when they lost to QPR.

“After a big performance on Monday night, we sort of let ourselves down. We came a little bit short. Any loss is disappointing, especially a derby loss.”

Fulham though, are a dangerous unit, especially given that manager Martin Jol loves to play a very, daring Dutch-attacking game. Liverpool had better be on their toes, or another shock could be on the cards.

London Eye



By Robert Davis

You may have noticed a large clampdown on diving during the first half of the 2012-2013 Premier League season as players seem to be booked week in, week out for simulation.

Tottenham Hotspur’s Gareth Bale tops the list, with four bookings already this season for simulation, which some might say comes down to an unfair reputation. But there are some players on the list though that may come as a surprise to some people, with the likes of Phil Neville and most recently Wes Hoolahan reprimanded for such actions.

But it’s the usual suspects who continue to grab the headlines for all the right reasons. Booked for simulation during a game, whilst replays show a different side of the story.

Fernando Torres and Luiz Suarez, as well as Bale, have all been wrongly booked for going down with no apparent contact. These players all have reputations for diving, fairly or unfairly, yet regardless of a play-

ers previous convictions on the pitch, to be wrongly cautioned for doing something which is so adamantly apposed of in England is harsh on the recipient of the booking.

Referees look to be getting the card out too easily. Everyone wants to see an end to diving, but booking a player for something that may, or may not have been a dive is the wrong way to tackle the situation. An official must be 100% percent certain that a player has dived before he brandishes a card, otherwise footballers will get a blemish on their record for simulation and gain an unfair reputation. An accusation of cheating is a rather embarrassing blemish to have.

The recent Bale case has made it even tougher for referees to make that split second decision within the pressures of a match. Spurs manager André Villas Boas has argued to the Football Association the reasons as to why the Welsh winger goes down with such apparent ease, revealing that previous career threatening injuries along with the speed in which Bale runs at means that to avoid contact being made, Bale has to go the ground in fear of being injured again.

To ask an official to judge, during a game, whether a player has dived to gain an unfair advantage for his side, or gone down to avoid a serious injury is an impossible task. Replays



Get Booked Or Dive Trying

provide much more conclusive evidence, therefore instead of blindly booking players unless absolutely certain of simulation, any player found guilty of diving should receive a fine or ban. The area where it becomes grey though is when the roles are reversed, as was the case with Arsenal’s Santi Cazorla a few weeks ago.

A home match against West Bromwich Albion saw referee Mike Jones award a penalty to Arsenal after it appeared Cazorla’s legs had been swept away by West Brom’s Steven Reid, though replays showed that the midfielder had clearly dived. An official can only judge what he can see, like most decisions he has to make, but if it is proved on further evidence that a player had dived, regardless of the decision, a fine or ban can still be sanctioned.

English fans have always seen diving as cheating and whilst football fans try to hang on to nostalgia as much as possible, the game has changed immensely over the years and

players do tend to go down easier and easier. What fans can get confused with though is that going down easily under a challenge isn’t a dive. If contact is made, regardless of how heavy or light the touch is, it still constitutes a bad attempt at a challenge, giving the player being tackled the right to go down or stay on his feet.

Players from England have been doing it for some time now as well, with Steven Gerrard and Michael Owen the main beneficiaries of the continental style of

‘falling down’. How many times have we seen Gerrard burst through the middle of the park, only to go down under the lightest of challenges in and around the area, or Owen fall to the ground in the area for England to win penalties in big competitions. Have they not gained as a big a reputation for diving simply because they are English?

So what of other countries outlook on diving? Whereas it is frowned upon in England, in South American countries and Spanish and Italian leagues, diving is seen less as cheating and more of an art form, possibly explaining Cazorla’s lack of apology for his actions.

Times are changing though, especially in Italy as they try to rid simulation from within their game. This season has already seen 39 bookings handed out for simulation in Serie A. The Premier League are second with 19 cases, whilst La Liga has seen just 11 bookings for diving.

So whilst you can commend the FA and the referee’s for starting to seriously clamp down on diving, it does need to be looked into with greater detail if they are going to tackle the problem head on. There is no harm in handing out bans and fines if absolutely certain that a dive has taken place, otherwise to accuse a player of cheating without being 100% certain is completely unfair.



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Wrap Italia

By Luca Cetta

Inter's slip grants Juve Winter crown

A win for Juventus over Atalanta, coupled with Inter and Napoli's losses, saw the Bianconeri take the winter crown. Milan continue to hunt the European zone as Fiorentina enjoyed a big Tuscan Derby win. Weekend results cost two coaches their job.

A week ago the question was posed whether Inter could finally claim the mantle of 'anti-Juve' – the Bianconeri's closest Scudetto challenger. A 2-1 win over Napoli propelled them into second, four points adrift of the leaders. Coach Andrea Stramaccioni did not want the tag attached to his team and was keen to focus only on Lazio. A goalless stalemate at Bologna had slightly halted Lazio's momentum, but as Stramaccioni knew, topping Vladimir Petkovic's men in Rome would be a difficult proposition. Miroslav Klose returned to the Lazio line-up, while Inter switched to a back four. Lazio controlled the contest, although Inter hit the post twice in the second half through Fredy Guarin and Antonio Cassano. Just eight minutes from time Klose latched on to Stefano Mauri's pass and swept the ball into the far corner for the only goal.



Juventus' Claudio Marchisio is challenged by Luca Cigarini and Maximiliano Moralez of Atalanta.

Stramaccioni said Inter did not deserve to lose, while Petkovic praised his star German. "I always say that the team works for Klose just as he works for the team by scoring goals. He is a great champion and puts his qualities at the disposal of the squad." A win for Juventus would grant them the title of Winter Champions. An ultimately worthless prize to be forgotten before the snow melts, it does hold certain weight. 13 of the past 17 winter winners have gone on to claim the championship. They were ruthless against Atalanta. Mirko Vucinic took just 80 seconds to open the scoring, while Andrea Pirlo doubled the advantage with a splendid free kick – his fourth of the season. Claudio Marchisio's long range drive sealed the result in the 26th minute. Things got worse for the visitors as Thomas Manfredini was given his marching orders just five minutes later. While Juve would

not add to the scoreboard, they would enjoy a commanding lead at the top. That is thanks to Napoli's shock 3-2 home loss versus Bologna. The Partenopei fell behind, however after the break Alessandro Gamberini and Edinson Cavani put them ahead with 20 minutes remaining. Yet there was a twist, with Panagiotis Kone scoring a goal of the season contender in the 87th minute. His incredible bicycle kick was followed up by Daniele Portanova's winner two minutes later. It was especially emotional for Portanova, who was making his return from a ban stemming from the betting scandal. Throughout his four month sentence he protested his innocence. In huge news midweek, that same scandal cost Napoli and two of its players. The Azzurri have been deducted two points, with captain Paolo Cannavaro and Gianluca Grava suspended for six months. The sentences stem from former

ITALY		Serie A										
		P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5Games		Most recent first
1	Juventus	17	13	2	2	36	10	+26	41	WW	WLD	
2	Internazionale	17	11	1	5	29	18	+11	34	LW	WLD	
3	Lazio	17	10	3	4	25	18	+7	33	WD	WWD	
4	Fiorentina	17	9	5	3	33	19	+14	32	WL	DDW	
5	Napoli	17	10	3	4	31	17	+14	31	LL	WWD	
6	Roma	17	9	2	6	38	27	+11	29	LW	WWW	
7	Milan	17	8	3	6	32	22	+10	27	WWW	WWD	
8	Catania	17	7	4	6	25	25	+0	25	WW	LLW	
9	Udinese	17	5	8	4	25	25	+0	23	DW	WLD	
10	Parma	17	6	5	6	23	23	+0	23	WLL	WLD	
11	Chievo	17	6	3	8	20	27	-7	21	WW	WDL	
12	Atalanta	17	7	2	8	17	26	-9	21	LW	LLL	
13	Bologna	17	5	3	9	20	22	-2	18	WD	WLW	
14	Sampdoria	17	5	3	9	20	26	-6	17	LL	DWW	
15	Torino	17	3	8	6	18	22	-4	16	DL	LDL	
16	Cagliari	17	4	4	9	15	30	-15	16	LLLL		
17	Palermo	17	3	6	8	15	24	-9	15	DLL	WL	
18	Pescara	17	4	2	11	13	34	-21	14	LW	LLL	
19	Genoa	17	3	4	10	17	29	-12	13	DLL	WL	
20	Siena	17	4	5	8	16	24	-8	11	LLL	DW	

reserve goalkeeper Matteo Gianello's attempt to fix a match between Napoli and Sampdoria in 2010. He reportedly asked the pair to participate. They refused, but did not go to the authorities and are charged with failure to report. Napoli were deemed 'objectively responsible'. They drop to fifth place. It took Milan just 35 seconds on their 113th birthday to open their account against Pescara. After Antonio Nocerino's opener they were gifted a second from Pescara's Elvis Abbruscato. Pescara halved the deficit, but Abbruscato's strike partner Johnathas also scored an own goal! If only they were as lethal at the other end. Stephan El Shaarawy compounded the misery. Four-star Fiorentina were too good for fellow Tuscans Siena. Luca Toni netted early, before David Pizarro – back after missing a match through compassionate leave – converted a penalty. Alberto Aquilani and Toni completed the rout, with Siena grabbing a consolation. Sitting bottom - mainly due to their points

deduction - Siena would sack Serse Cosmi post-match. Roma Coach Zdenek Zeman was angry enough post-match at Chievo to skip the press conference. Amid heavy fog, Rome fell to Sergio Pellissier's second half winner. Rome felt it was offside, but Chievo celebrated their third win on the trot. Elsewhere, Udinese snatched a last-minute point in an entertaining draw with Palermo. Catania had to come from behind but eventually overpowered Sampdoria 3-1, as the Blucerchiati's cross-town rivals Genoa drew 1-1 with Torino. Finally, Parma crushed Cagliari 4-1, on the day they celebrated their 99th anniversary. The Rossoneri's form revival has seen them catapult up the ladder to sit just seven points behind Inter. They are just two behind weekend adversary Roma. They clash on Saturday, both looking to end 2012 on a high. Massimiliano Allegri has conceded Robinho "wants to go home" amid interest from Santos, so this may be his last match with

Milan. The Giallorossi will be without Leandro Castan after he reached the yellow card limit. Juventus, Lazio and Napoli are on the road. The reigning champions face struggling Cagliari, who have picked up just two points from a possible 21. Lazio take on Sampdoria, who replaced Ciro Ferrara with Delio Rossi on Monday. Meanwhile, Napoli will be aiming to make up ground when they face Siena. Inter are at home against Genoa. Rossoblu tactician Luigi Del Neri could face the sack with a defeat. He saved his skin last week, but failure could be costly. Atalanta will look to put that heavy defeat to Juve behind them when they host Udinese. Bologna and Parma clash after picking up excellent victories last weekend, while Palermo hosts the dangerous Fiorentina. Pescara have shown some recent improvement but will be tested against Catania, and finally, Torino host in-form Chievo.

Falcao Scores, Barcelona Win, Still Waiting For ESPN to Respond



Viva Espana

By Pepe Lopez

Last weekend, 2nd placed Atletico Madrid travelled north to the Catalunya region to play against 1st placed Barcelona in the Spanish La Liga.

The odds were stacked against Atletico to get anything out of this match, however the impressive coach of Atleti, Argentine Diego Simeone organised his team to near perfection in the first half. The visitors from Madrid did their best to close down the Barca midfield "tiki-taka" short passing play. In fact, Atleti managed to have the first 3 shots on goal in the match, including a wonderful run and chip from Colombian Radamel Falcao to open the scoring in the 31st minute. However, Barcelona with just their first shot on goal equalised with a stunning shot from Brazilian defender



Lionel Messi scores Barcelona's fourth goal in the top of the table clash against Atletico Madrid.

Adriano. To add insult to injury, Barcelona scored with the last play of the first half. Midfielder Sergio Busquets put Barca in front. In the second half, goal scoring sensation Leo Messi scored his 89th and 90th goals of the year, taking advantage of a demoralised Atletico Madrid team late in the match. A clearly frustrated Atletico Madrid Coach Diego Simeone ranted afterwards at the press conference; "Let's talk about the Barcelona game. I am leaving here with the fla-

vour of a team that is good. We have tried to be competitive and we were in the game for a long time, but this is a boring League now. Barcelona are playing in a different championship from the rest. We played a perfect first half when we had three clear chances to score. We closed off all the paths where they could hurt us, then they scored from their first shot. The game was decided by them taking their chances." Later in the week, former

SPAIN		La Liga										
		P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5Games		Most recent first
1	Barcelona	16	15	1	0	54	18	+36	46	WWW	WWW	
2	Atletico Madrid	16	12	1	3	36	17	+19	37	LWL	WWW	
3	Real Madrid	16	10	3	3	39	14	+25	33	DWW	LW	
4	Málaga	16	8	4	4	25	10	+15	28	WW	LWD	
5	Real Betis	16	9	1	6	25	26	-1	28	WLW	WL	
6	Levante	16	8	3	5	21	21	+0	27	WWD	LW	
7	Getafe	16	7	3	6	19	21	-2	24	DDW	WWW	
8	Real Valladolid	16	6	4	6	22	18	+4	22	DLW	WL	
9	Real Sociedad	16	6	4	6	22	19	+3	22	DDW	DW	
10	Rayo Vallecano	16	7	1	8	19	32	-13	22	WLL	WL	
11	Valencia	16	6	3	7	19	24	-5	21	LWL	WL	
12	Athletic Club	16	6	3	7	21	32	-11	21	WW	LDL	
13	Sevilla	16	5	4	7	21	24	-3	19	LDL	WL	
14	Real Zaragoza	16	6	1	9	18	24	-6	19	LWD	LL	
15	Celta de Vigo	16	4	3	9	16	21	-5	15	LLD	WD	
16	Osasuna	16	3	5	8	13	17	-4	14	DLW	DD	
17	Granada	16	3	4	9	11	24	-13	13	DDL	LL	
18	Mallorca	16	3	4	9	14	28	-14	13	LLD	LD	
19	Espanyol	16	2	6	8	17	26	-9	12	DDD	LL	
20	Deportivo La C...	16	2	6	8	21	37	-16	12	DDL	DL	

Spanish and Atletico Madrid Coach Luis Aragones weighed into the argument, refuting Diego Simeone's claim that La Liga was boring, but also gave support for the young Coach; "I would not say that it is boring because there are still two teams playing for the championship. And then there are three of four teams who are fighting out for the remaining Champions League places. Real Madrid will always fight until the end and Atletico also have

a chance because they are doing well. "El Cholo" [Diego Simeone] is doing an outstanding job at Atletico and his team are responding to what the fans and the coach require." Meanwhile, your loyal Spanish La Liga reporter, Pepe Lopez, has continued to question ESPN Australia on their lack of Spanish Football coverage this season; "Surely ESPN Australia could compensate with the loss of soccer coverage this season, including La

Latest Results		This Week	
Getafe 1 - 1 Osasuna	Rayo Vallecano v Levante		
Mallorca 0 - 1 Athletic Club	Real Sociedad v Sevilla		
Granada 0 - 0 Real Sociedad	Espanyol v Deportivo		
Sevilla 0 - 2 Málaga	Valencia v Getafe		
R Zaragoza 0 - 1 Levante	Atletico Madrid v Celta Vigo		
Valencia 0 - 1 R Vallecano	Real Betis v Mallorca		
Real Madrid 2 - 2 Espanyol	Real Valladolid v Barcelona		
Barcelona 4 - 1 Atlético Madrid	Osasuna v Granada		
Deportivo 0 - 0 R Valladolid	Málaga v Real Madrid		
Celta Vigo 0 - 1 Real Betis	Athletic Club v R Zaragoza		

One To Watch This Weekend...

On Saturday morning Melbourne time, 3rd placed Real Madrid will travel south to tackle 4th placed Malaga. The team on Spain's "Costa Del Sol" tourist haven can bridge the gap between themselves and Real to just 2 points with a win in this fixture.

Liga and Europa League live matches, with a weekly delayed highlights program of the various European major leagues such as La Liga and Serie A? Do you have any comments on this matter?" Unfortunately, ESPN Australia have not yet responded to Pepe Lopez's latest round of questions, rest assured that Pepe Lopez will not rest on this matter until La Liga coverage is returned to Australian television screens!



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CROATIA 1.HNL																
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games <i>Most recent first</i>							
1 Dinamo Zagreb	18	13	2	3	39	14	+25	41	W	L	W	L	W			
2 Hajduk Split	19	9	6	4	27	14	+13	33	W	D	D	D	W			
3 Lokomotiva	19	9	5	5	27	21	+6	32	W	L	W	D	W			
4 Rijeka	19	9	5	5	28	23	+5	32	D	D	W	W	L			
5 Slaven Koprivnica	19	9	4	6	28	26	+2	31	D	W	L	W	L			
6 Split	19	9	3	7	28	22	+6	30	L	W	W	L	W			
7 Osijek	18	5	8	5	19	17	+2	23	L	D	L	D	L			
8 Istra 1961	19	5	5	9	17	22	-5	20	L	D	L	L	W			
9 Inter Zaprešić	19	4	7	8	21	25	-4	19	L	L	L	W	D			
10 Zadar	19	4	5	10	20	36	-16	17	W	D	W	L	W			
11 Cibalia	19	4	4	11	16	31	-15	16	L	D	L	W	L			
12 Zagreb	19	4	4	11	12	31	-19	16	D	W	L	L				

GERMANY Bundesliga																
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games <i>Most recent first</i>							
1 Bayern München	17	13	3	1	44	7	+37	42	D	W	D	W	W			
2 Bayer Leverkusen	17	10	3	4	33	22	+11	33	W	L	W	W	W			
3 Borussia Dortmund	17	8	6	3	35	20	+15	30	W	L	D	D	W			
4 Eintracht Fran...	17	9	3	5	33	27	+6	30	W	W	L	L	D			
5 Freiburg	17	7	5	5	24	18	+6	26	W	W	D	L	W			
6 Mainz 05	17	8	2	7	24	21	+3	26	W	L	W	W	L			
7 Schalke 04	17	7	4	6	27	25	+2	25	L	L	D	L	D			
8 Borussia M'gla...	17	6	7	4	25	26	-1	25	D	W	D	W	D			
9 Stuttgart	17	7	4	6	21	28	-7	25	W	W	W	L	L			
10 Hamburger SV	17	7	3	7	18	21	-3	24	L	W	D	W	L			
11 Hannover 96	17	7	2	8	32	31	+1	23	L	W	L	W	L			
12 Werder Bremen	17	6	4	7	28	29	-1	22	D	L	W	L	D			
13 Fortuna Düsseldorf	17	5	6	6	20	22	-2	21	W	L	W	D	W			
14 Nürnberg	17	5	5	7	17	22	-5	20	D	W	L	W	D			
15 Wolfsburg	17	5	4	8	17	27	-10	19	L	W	L	L	D			
16 Hoffenheim	17	3	3	11	23	41	-18	12	L	L	L	L	L			
17 Augsburg	17	1	6	10	12	29	-17	9	D	L	D	L	D			
18 Greuther Fürth	17	1	6	10	11	28	-17	9	D	L	L	L	D			

THE CHAMPIONSHIP																
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games <i>Most recent first</i>							
1 Cardiff City	22	14	2	6	43	28	+15	44	L	W	D	D	W			
2 Crystal Palace	22	12	6	4	43	28	+15	42	D	D	W	D	L			
3 Middlesbrough	22	13	2	7	39	29	+10	41	W	W	L	W	L			
4 Hull City	22	13	2	7	33	26	+7	41	W	W	W	D	L			
5 Leicester City	22	11	4	7	37	21	+16	37	L	D	W	L	W			
6 Millwall	23	10	7	6	36	31	+5	37	D	W	L	D	W			
7 Watford	22	10	4	8	39	31	+8	34	D	L	W	W	D			
8 Brighton & Hov...	23	8	10	5	31	23	+8	34	D	D	D	L	W			
9 Nottingham Forest	22	8	9	5	30	26	+4	33	D	W	L	L	W			
10 Derby County	22	9	6	7	35	32	+3	33	W	W	L	D	W			
11 Blackpool	22	8	8	6	39	31	+8	32	D	W	D	D	D			
12 Leeds United	22	9	5	8	33	35	-2	32	W	L	W	W	W			
13 Bolton Wanderers	22	7	8	7	32	32	+0	29	D	W	L	W	D			
14 Charlton Athletic	22	7	8	7	28	28	+0	29	W	D	L	D	W			
15 Blackburn Rovers	22	7	8	7	29	31	-2	29	L	L	D	L	L			
16 Burnley	22	8	5	9	34	37	-3	29	D	L	D	D	W			
17 Huddersfield Town	22	8	5	9	28	35	-7	29	D	L	L	L	D			
18 Wolverhampton ...	22	8	4	10	29	29	+0	28	L	W	W	L	L			
19 Birmingham City	22	6	7	9	28	35	-7	25	D	L	W	D	L			
20 Ipswich Town	22	6	5	11	22	43	-21	23	L	W	W	W	D			
21 Bristol City	22	5	3	14	32	45	-13	18	L	W	L	L	W			
22 Barnsley	22	4	6	12	21	35	-14	18	L	D	L	D	L			
23 Sheffield Wedn...	22	5	3	14	25	40	-15	18	W	L	L	L	L			
24 Peterborough U...	22	5	1	16	25	40	-15	16	W	L	L	L	D			

Greece Super League																
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games <i>Most recent first</i>							
1 Olympiakos Piraeus	15	12	3	0	35	10	+25	39	W	D	W	D	W			
2 PAOK	15	9	4	2	21	9	+12	31	W	W	D	D	L			
3 Asteras Tripolis	15	7	4	4	19	10	+9	25	L	D	D	W	D			
4 Atromitos	15	6	7	2	15	12	+3	25	D	W	D	W	L			
5 Levadiakos	15	6	3	6	11	12	-1	21	W	L	W	W	W			
6 PAS Giannina	15	6	3	6	15	14	+1	21	L	W	L	W	W			
7 Panionios	15	7	0	8	17	20	-3	21	L	L	L	L	L			
8 Panthrakikos	15	6	2	7	16	16	+0	20	W	W	D	W	D			
9 Panathinaikos	15	5	7	3	16	15	+1	20	L	D	L	W	L			
10 OFI	15	4	5	6	16	18	-2	17	W	D	L	L	L			
11 Plataniás	15	4	4	7	13	18	-5	16	L	D	L	W	L			
12 Xanthi	15	3	6	6	11	16	-5	15	D	W	D	L	D			
13 Veria	15	3	6	6	10	17	-7	15	W	D	D	D	L			
14 Aris	15	2	7	6	12	22	-10	13	D	D	D	L	L			
15 AEK Athens	15	3	3	9	11	17	-6	12	D	L	W	L	W			
16 Kerkyra	15	2	6	7	7	19	-12	12	L	L	L	D	L			

TURKEY Süper Lig																
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games <i>Most recent first</i>							
1 Galatasaray	16	9	5	2	34	20	+14	32	W	D	W	L	W			
2 Fenerbahçe	16	7	6	3	24	16	+8	27	L	W	D	W	D			
3 Beşiktaş	16	7	6	3	35	24	+11	27	D	D	W	W	W			
4 Antalyaspor	15	8	3	4	26	20	+6	27	D	W	D	L	D			
5 Eskişehirspor	16	6	6	4	31	21	+10	24	D	D	D	W	D			
6 Kasımpaşa	16	6	5	5	24	18	+6	23	L	D	D	D	W			
7 Bursaspor	16	5	8	3	26	20	+6	23	D	W	D	D	W			
8 Trabzonspor	16	6	5	5	19	15	+4	23	L	D	W	L	W			
9 Karabükspor	16	6	3	7	20	25	-5	21	W	W	L	L	W			
10 Gençlerbirliği	16	4	8	4	25	26	-1	20	D	D	L	L	D			
11 Orduspor	16	4	7	5	19	19	+0	19	D	L	L	D	L			
12 Sivasspor	16	5	4	7	18	23	-5	19	L	L	L	W	D			
13 Kayserispor	16	5	4	7	21	26	-5	19	W	D	D	L	D			
14 İstanbul BB	16	5	3	8	17	20	-3	18	L	W	L	W	D			
15 Gaziantepspor	16	4	5	7	14	23	-9	17	D	L	D	W	D			
16 Elazığspor	16	3	7	6	10	24	-14	16	D	W	W	L	D			
17 Mersin İdmanyurdu	16	3	6	7	17	25	-8	15	W	L	L	W	L			
18 Akhisar Beledi...	15	2	5	8	11	26	-15	11	L	D	L	L	L			

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